REDISCOVERING
URBAN WATERS

A project for the local community in West Kyoto

Architecture Master Thesis

Student: Chiara Vinci

Advisor: Professor Subhash Mukerjee

Co- Advisor: Professor Lorena Alessio

CONTENTS

——

INTRODUCTION

This thesis investigates the binomial urban redevelopment/social regeneration, going to analyze the Kyoto case. The aim is learning through the study of the morphological and cultural evolution of the city over time and its connections with social life.

The focus is on the two-way relationship between urban morphological changes and changes in the lifestyle of those who live in the city, noting how much social life is the architect of formal change, but also completely subordinate to the shape of the city itself.

The aim of the thesis is focusing on social regeneration, proposing a way out of high density that prohibits the revenue of spaces for the community. The intent is therefore to investigate an alternative to the road as a place of interaction par excellence now changed, the river.

The thesis project then fits into a high-density residential district, Kamigyo, and retraces the banks of the Tenjin River, inserting spaces for the community between urban voids and the river itself.

Following two main themes of water and community, the proposed functions aim at reconnecting a dense but decomposed fabric in many micro-units not communicating with each other.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

01

Kyoto has been the Japan's political and cultural capital after the repositioning of the imperial seat from Nara in 794 A.D.. Settled on a grid pattern of streets in the center of a basin surrounded from the east, west and north side by mountains and crossed by various rivers. The city developed mostly through the east side, during the Heian Period (780-1190 A.D.), while it remained almost unchanged during the Edo Period (1600-1868). One of the most destructing events is the fire of the late IXX century, followed by a reconstruction based on the Edo Period structure.

Until the dawn of the modern era Kyoto remained the imperial seat. With the come to power of Meji Period, the capital moved to Tokyo.

From that moment on, Kyoto started to change. A place for urban facilities was acquired from the original urban grid and streets were widened because of the arrival of cars.

Despite of this first changes the general appearance of the city as a whole have scarcely changed. From 1860 to 1880 Kyoto was involved in the greatest process of transformation of its general appearance.

Although the increasing interest in urban transformation, most of Japan's large cities were damaged during the Second World War, involving the post war Japan in a new challenge: building new parts of the cities in the destroyed lands.

The first consequence has been the gradual loss of historic urban environment, because of the import of western technology in urban renewal.

The great opportunity to reconstruct the city centers led the major cities to thoroughly change their historical asset and aspect.

Regarding the imperial capitals Kyoto , Nara and Kanazawa, the bombing was less invasive, giving the opportunity to better resist to the modernization process, but new constructions rules and permissions in order to promote the reconstruction were anyway applied.[1]

---

[1]   Masafumi Yamasaki, Kyoto, its cityscapes, traditions and heritage, Process Architecture,n.116, 1994

Rakuchu Rakugai, early XVII century

KYOTO URBAN STRUCTURE

The structure of Heian-kyo is the expression of the imperial power, perfectly embodied by the mononuclear appearance of the capital. The location choice itself represents the intention by Emperor Kammu to establish his new capital in a more favorable land, where no limits in terms of soil and water could arrest its infinite expansion following the given grid master. The basic structural plan is based on Ristsuryo codes , imported from China in the seventh century[1]. Oriented from north to south, Heian-kyo's grid covered a rectangular area 4.4 kilometers wide and 5.2 kilometers tall. A massive, walled imperial enclosure, called the 'Daidari' was located at the top center of the cityscape. Extending south from the Daidairi and connecting the enclosure to the capital's formal entrance gate of Rajo to the south was Suzaku Road. (Stavros,2014) The same road crossing the whole city, was dividing it in two parts: Sakyo (left capital) and Ukyo (right capital).

1   Matthew Stavros, Kyoto, an urban history of Japan's premodern capital, Honolulu, 2014
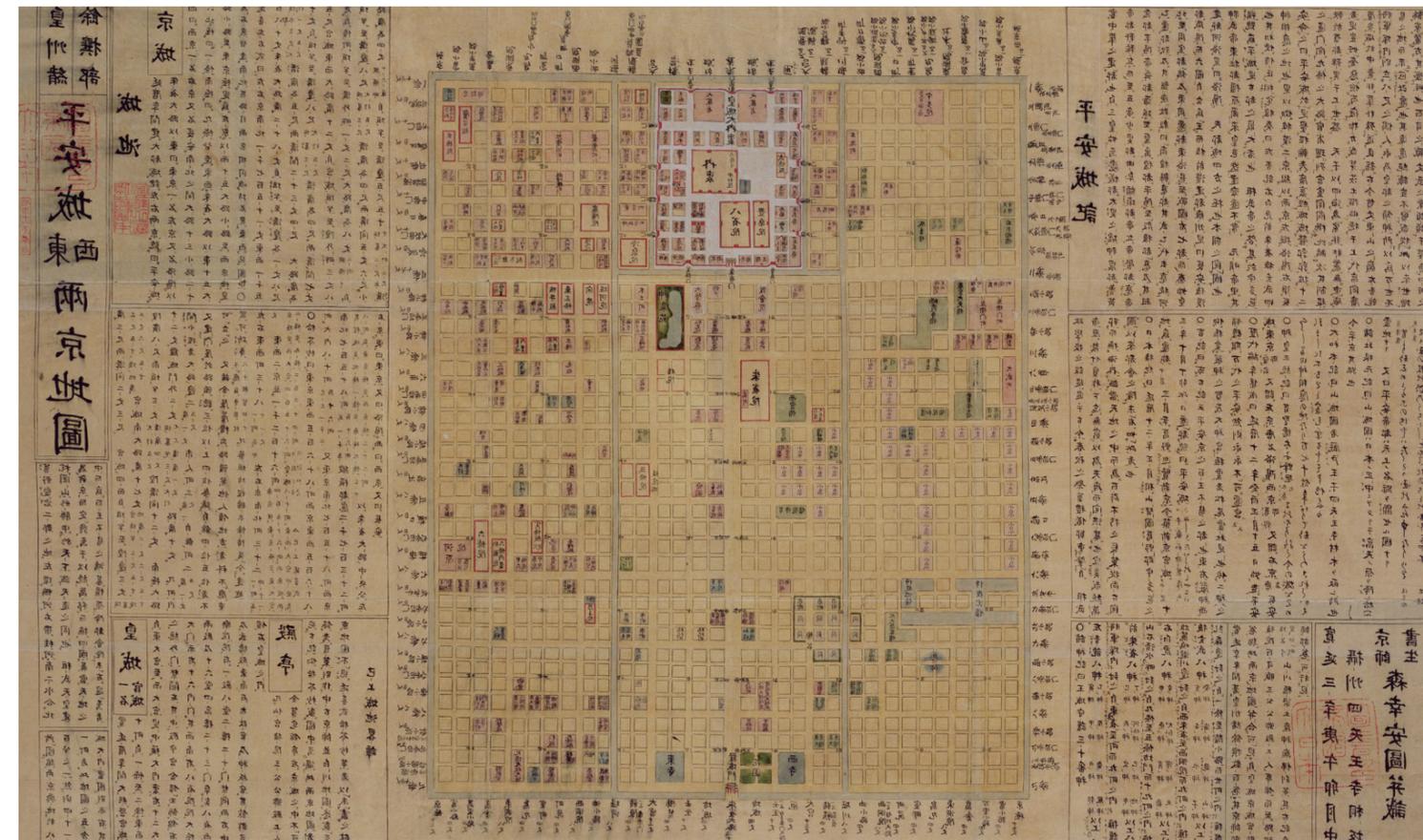
Heyan-kyo 1750

FROM TOP-DOWN TO BOTTOM-UP
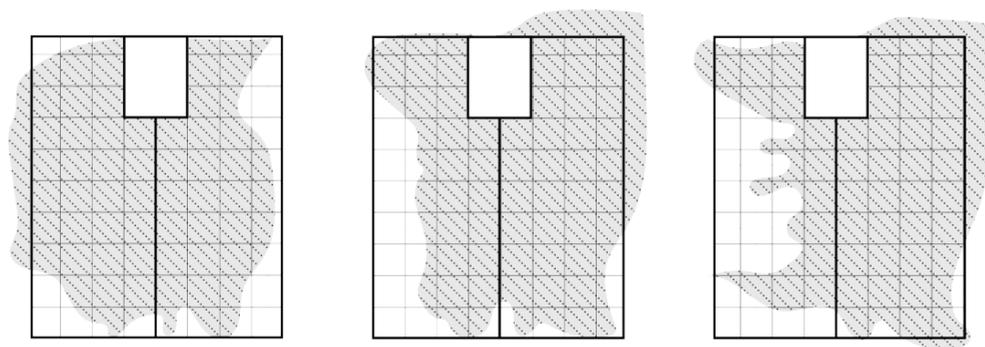
THE IDEAL MACHI   THE REAL MACHI   CHO

Machi:the essential urban building block.
The grid master is organized in blocks, where the single unit is called *machi* (120mx120m). The assignment of machi was strictly related to the ranks of Japanese society.

"Lower-ranking members of the aristocracy, sixth rank and below, were allocated one fourth of a machi. Mid ranking aristocrats, those of fourth and fifth rank, were given a half-'machi'. And finally, whole 'machi' were allocated to the highest members of the court aristocracy, third rank and above." (Stavros 2014)

Planners of Heian-kyo thought was more useful to start composing the grid from the single machi instead of obtaining it dividing the whole grid until the achievement of the single unit. It was therefore seen as a multiplication process of a single unit. The grid is finally crossed by a clear and hierarchical system of roads. The general distinction is made between "great roads" called *oji*, and "minor roads", called *koji*. Again, this hierarchical order is given not only because of a spatial organization but also to reflect the ranking nature of Japanese society. The widest and most important road was exclusively used by the emperor, Suzaku.

The fascinating aspect of the development of this clear and long-lasting plan is that the grid remained an ideal feature. Through the time, the original master has been filled always differently, expanding most of all in the Sakyo area, leaving the Ukyo to agriculture activities. In the figure is evidenced the development of the capital during the early period, stating how Heian grid was 'likely never completed as planned.' [1]

One of the main differences from the original plan, is the alteration of the *machi* regarding its single parts. Commoners were addressed to live in just 1/32 unit of *machi*. This unit was called *henushi*, organized in four rows and separated by two roads crossing the *machi* from corner to corner. The nature of this new urban block led the single property to become always narrower and longer, forming a little courtyard on the backside of each row.

Streets at the center of everyday life. The importance of roads was always stronger, since every urban and social activities happened along the main roads. Roads are already seen as a place of interactions and commercial culture, an element unforeseen by urban planners of that time. It is the case of a natural definition of hierarchies and spaces in the urban structure.

Thanks to the role given to streets, a new unit was formed, intended as a shared social unit defined as *cho*. From about the twelfth century *cho* stands for a united collective unit consisting of two opposing block faces. This system, appeared is now defining feature of Kyoto's official political geography. *"Square city blocks were rational from a planning perspective and useful in terms of centralized administration. For urban residents, however, it was the street that mattered most"* (Stavros, 2014)

1   Matthew Stavros, Kyoto, an urban history of Japan's premodern capital, Honolulu, 2014

'ROJI'

Developing in parallel with 'cho' communities, Roji became part of the city from that moment on. Appeared not only to respond to a need of connection along the rows crossing the 'cho', but also as a new place of sharing activities among the inhabitants of the block. Examining once again the development of row urban houses and organization of a typical urban district is clear how over time spaces addressed to public facilities was always decreasing, until reaching small sizes or non-existent at all.

ing space or internal courtyard placed in the middle of each block. That does Spaces addressed to public activities are now the small alleys crossing the alignment of row houses. Roji at the center of social life were constituting a new way of living the neighborhood. [1] Going deeper in Roji analysis is also notable how they represent an "extension of private internal spaces in the public road. Here the inhabitants could find a place for their own small yards, to dispense tools and every-day life objects."[2]

"Even today, if you walk around the alleyways of Kyoto you come across scenes just like those of my memories. Probably this is because there is a lifestyle here in Kyoto deeply rooted in local custom, linked from the past to the present and into the future"

Starting from an initial solution that saw the temple in the middle of machi, reachable from each corner of the block, passing through a period in which row houses were occupying the borders of machi, finally arrived at the expansion of private properties at most allowed in length.

Once reached this configuration, what was definitely lost was the encountering space or internal courtyard placed in the middle of each block. That does not necessarily mean a regression, but only a re-configuration in terms of urban structure and social life.

Even looking a t Roji from the romantic point of view, they are one of the strongest meaning of connection between past and present in Japan urban lifestyle. This is the environment that "..carries some of key qualities related to the structure and practices of the urban life of past times."

(Muminović 2013)

1   Yoshiro OnoKyoto Design Lab

2   Attilio Michele De Palma, Living in Roji Alleys: smallness, sharing and public space", 2016
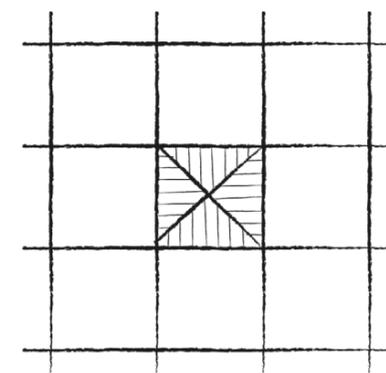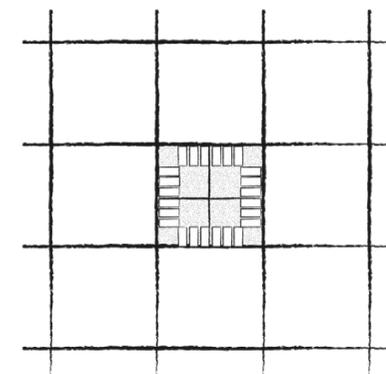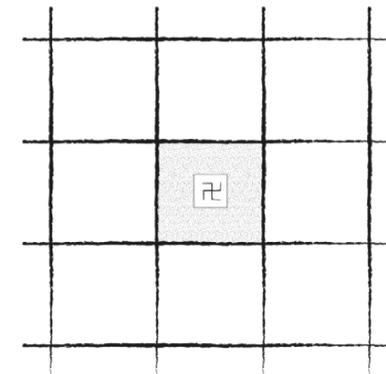
Evolution
of Kyoto
Urban
Block

Mizuno, Kayu, Kyoto
alleway scenes, 2005
Sakyo Area

Mizuno, Kayu, Kyoto
alleway scenes, 2005
Sakyo Area

RIVERS

The reason why Kyoto became the place on which to base the imperial capital is also the rich presence of waterways. The city is enclosed not only by the mountains, but also accompanied and bounded by the passage of large rivers, which has always been an essential element for the development of a society. Not only as a source of livelihood, but also as a place for social life.

The banks of the rivers, especially the most prosperous ones such as the Kamo and the Katsura rivers, have over the centuries accepted the need for society to have places of leisure.

This is not an exclusive feature of Kyoto, in many Japanese cities history marks rivers as leisure districts, particularly the current capital of Tokyo. In some the spirit still remains, like Osaka. And where even the spirit is not supported by adequate equipment or facilities, the will to live on the banks of the river remains evident in every season of the year.

Kamo river.

The most important river is the Kamo river. Since its origins its waters are considered as the purest and therefore along its banks purification rites were carried out also linked to the rise of the new emperor.

During the course of history, the flow of the river changes continuously, bringing the inhabitants of the capital to enrich the river bed partly dried up by placing new functions. In particular, in the Middle Ages, the banks earned were used for the development of festivals mostly of an artistic nature.

From the sixteenth century, theaters were built along the banks of the river, extending from Gojo bridge to Shijobashi. They were later joined or replaced by tea houses defining the banks of the river as a place of pleasure.

Although today the structures along the banks can only be temporary and only during the summer season, it is clear that the kyotoites still consider this place as a moment of pleasure and detachment from the city. Long pedestrian and cycle paths along the river bed and in any season of the year it is possible to see the crowds.
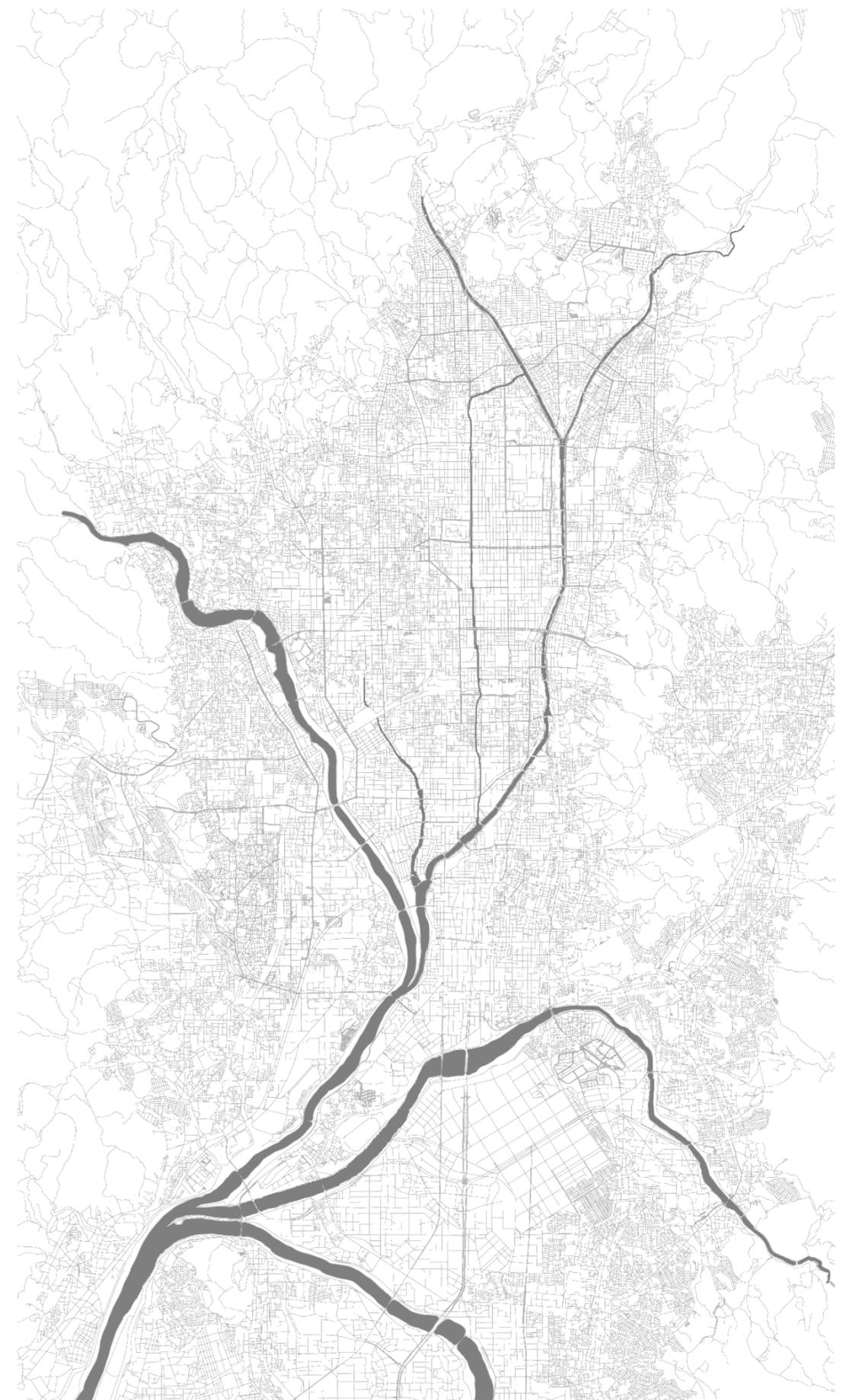
SUBURBS

Kamigyo and Shamigyo.

Approaching to the medieval era, Kyoto was little by little changing the assignment of power, both in terms of actors involved and places involved. From the Emperor and his imperial Palace to the aristocracy and its homes called kenmon. Various privatized spots were representing a great spatial transformation in the capital that loses its master planned uniform grid and become an ensamble of urban islands.

" It had made the transition from 'Heyan-kyo' the capital of peace and tranquility to 'Kyoto' a fractured privatized and pluralistic metropolis" (Stavros 2014)

Kamigyo is the first district forming in the northeast in juxtaposition with Shamigyo district in the 'lower capital'. Since its close location to the imperial enclosure Daidairi, Kamigyo was naturally becoming the more flourished district in relation to Shamigyo. Defined as an elite district, was mostly populated by aristocracy, called kuge. Despite this characteristic it would be wrong to consider the whole district as a well-defined unit. Commoners, artisans, craftsmen and merchants were populating the district as well. [1]

1   Matthew Stavros, Kyoto, an urban history of Japan's premodern capital, Honolulu, 2014
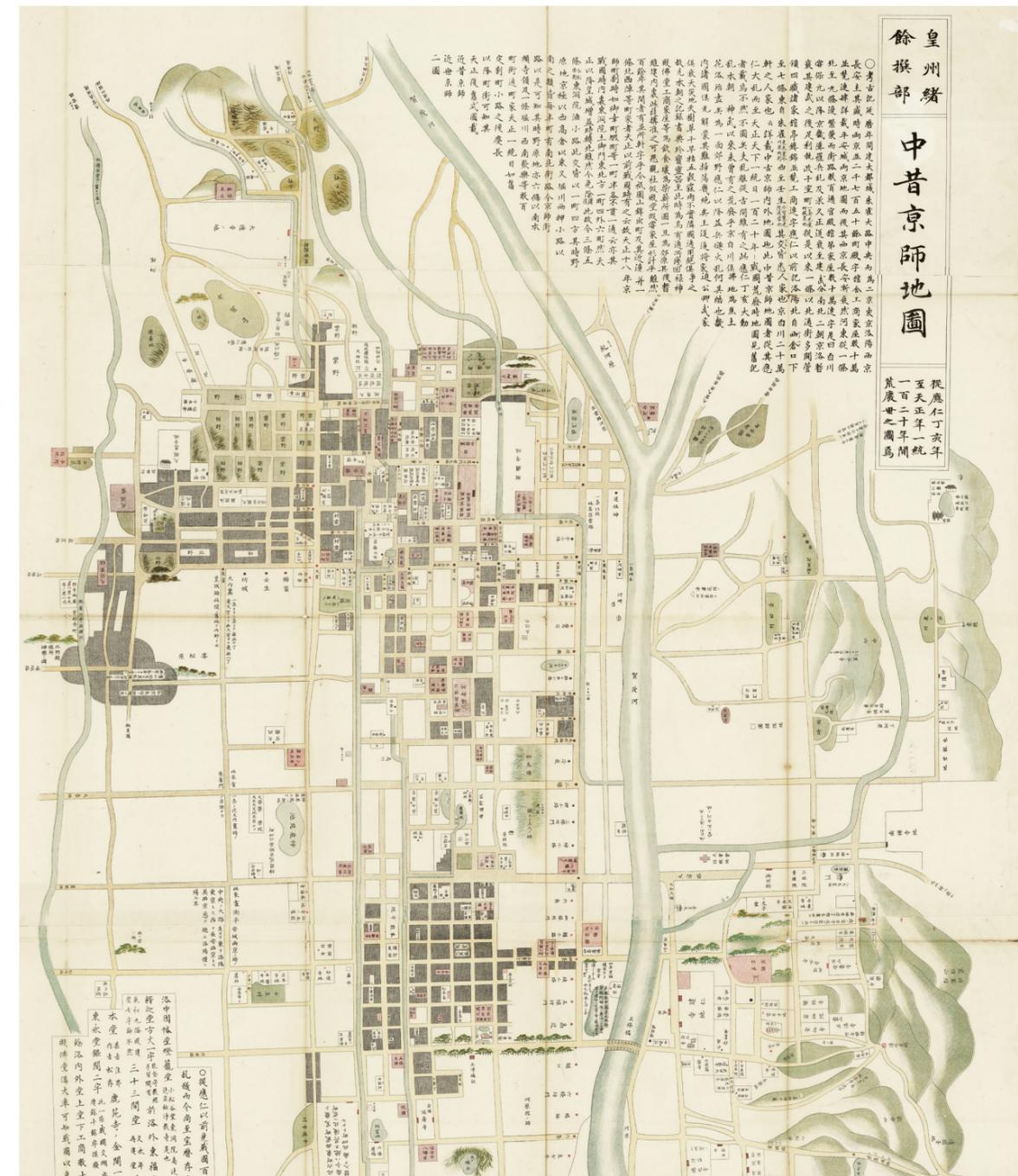
TRADITIONAL JAPANESE TOWN HOUSE - MACHIYA

From the twelfth century, a great element of Japanese urban architecture appeared. Mostly in Shamigyo but also in Kamigyo, the typical Japanese urban house, 'Machiya', was developing in parallel with the evolution of urban block from 'machi' to 'cho'.

It is born as a multipurpose building built by commoners in order to cover at its maximum their narrow, long portion of cho. Provided of a front space addressed to commercial facilities it was thought to host all services needed for a daily life of an entire family.

Megane-e, Shijo Shibai by
Maruyama Okyo, 18th century

Historical
Development of
streetscape

Heian Period (794 | 1185)
Simplicity.

From paintings made in He-
ian period is understandable the
architecture of the first example of
town house in Kyoto. Dictated by a
sense of simplicity and essential-
ity, pre-medieval town houses are
somewhat roughly built, but already
perfectly organized along the main
and secondary roads. [1]

*"They all follow a basic, exist-
ing pattern and it can be assumed
that this style of building had been
followed for thousand years."* (Masa-
fumi Yamasaki, 1994)

The construction technic
for each element is intertwining of
boards into a wickerwork pattern.

Muromachi Period (1568 | 1600)
Development.

Going to Muromachi period,
Machiya features started to go more
in detail. A greater accuracy was
given to the construction of roofs,
now reinforced with a bamboo grid,
allowing to build also two-storey
buildings. Windows became larger
and taller giving to the house a com-
plete opening to the outside from
the floor to the roof level.

The connection with the out-
side and the consequent importance
giving to the roads in everyday life is
here accentuated more and more.

Sengoku Period (1482 | 1558)
Personalization.

This period was character-
ized by the civil war, followed by the
greatest development of town build-
ings in Kyoto. The urban fabric is now
starting to be mixed, composed of
single storey buildings interchanged
with two-storey ones. The second
typology started to be always more
present in the neighborhoods, gen-
erating a new interest in improving
the construction system of the sec-
ond floor.

*"This change in the handling
of the second floor marked the begin-
ning of a move towards the estab-
lishment of a more settled design for
such town houses."* (Masafumi Yama-
saki, 1994)

At the street level, what was
changing was instead the person-
alization of little features upon the
façade. Starting from the color,
passing to the various patterns for
the grids or the different equipment
arranged along the windows in rela-
tion to the activity happening in the
inside. More attention is finally payed
to the interior design.

1   Masafumi Yamasaki, Kyoto:
its cityscape traditions and heritage,
Process Architecture, n.116, 1994

Standardization.

The most known and effective paintings in order to understand the transition to the standardization that characterized the XVIII century are streetscapes attributed to Maruyama Okyo. In the representation of Shijo Shibai and Gion Otabisho in detail, Okyo show us from a new point of view, the one of the passerby, how town houses are always more similar to each other.

"This kind of standardization clearly shows that people of Kyoto were more interested in marrying the details of the design of townhouses than they were in exteriors with individuality." [1]

After all, *"traditional Japanese architecture predated modernist ideas of modularization" (Brumann),* starting from the basic unit dictated by the size of tatami. In relation to other Japanese cities, Kyotoites showed a notable attention to the preservation of simplicity and regularity in shapes, elements and details. This attitude tends to be quite similar to the western school of thought. It is possible to gather how this careful consideration still remains in the present Kyoto.
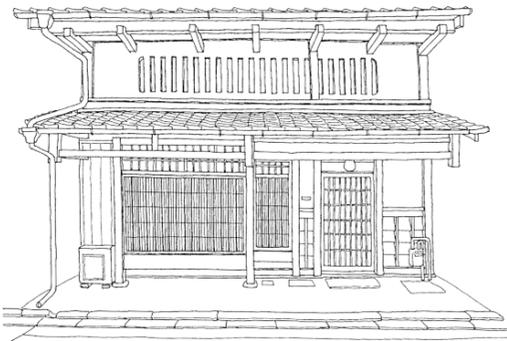
1   Masafumi Yamasaki, Kyoto: its cityscape traditions and heritage, Process Architecture, n.116, 1994
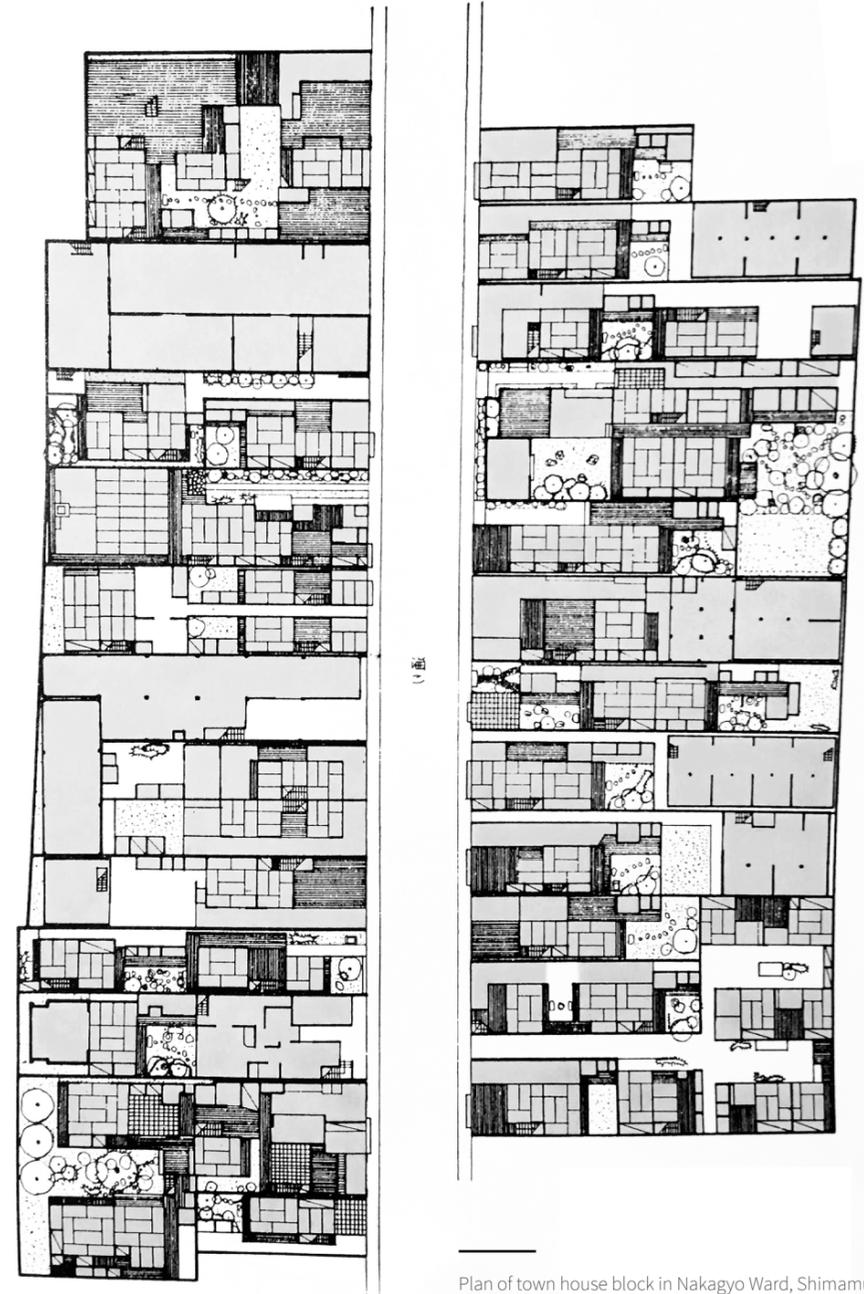
Plan of town house block in Nakagyo Ward, Shimamura Noboru, 1971

Machiya Decline and Rise

Post war decline.

"With the advent of the pacific war, machiya construction ceased around 1937, never to be fully resumed" (Brumann) In addition to the construction rest, strong earthquakes and huge fires played also an important role in the loss of Machiya and the consequent social disintegration. Even if wooden building could better resist to earthquakes, people were made to don't trust machiya anymore.

"However, although it is currently being rethought, post-war legislation effectively outlawed the Kyo-Machiya (…) Houses built before the enactment of the new laws were tolerated, but this meant that they only could be repaired and neither replaced by a new" (Brumann)

Lifestyle changes and building companies.

From Tokyo Olympic games in 1964 new typologies of dwellings started to appear, "a whole new residential concept". Prewar houses were adapted to the new tastes. Reasons of this turn has mainly been: housing shortage in the cities into which half of the nation moved; first post-war generation rejection of traditional materials and architecture culture. In addition to a simple rejection for an old style, Machiya were also considered as 'inimical to the idea of modern' and the new idea of living.

After the second world war bombing, big building companies were interested on other Japanese cities reconstruction. Kyoto, almost untouched by the bombing, could need just little intervention. Small building companies started therefore to re-build Kyoto urban voids, proposing fast and cheap prefabricated solutions, replacing the old

Machiya. It is the beginning of a new dwelling style, more suitable to the new needs of citizen and without any need of restoration since they were thought and build to last about 20-30 years and then directly demolished.

"Between 1983 and 1993, the percentage of pre-war architecture in Kyoto felt down from 48.1% to 25.4% (…) A further 1000 houses every year are turn down" [1]

The Machiya boom.

From 1990s a new way of thought about machiya was developing. Many old town houses started to be restored and re used initially for commercial activities. Just 50 in 1990, then 150 in 1998 untill reaching 400 interventions of restoration in 2001. This new tendency lead the municipality to draw up for the first time in 1970s a set of rules and classifications of ancient machiya spread all over the urban area in order to "*carry the Machiya building tradition in the future*". (Brumann, 2012)

Once recognized the value of the historical heritage of Kyoto, after a relatively long period of oblivion following the post war rearrangement, the municipality is finally engaged in renovating the citizens sensibility and participation in preserving the beauty of the place.

In the next chapter, analyzing the contemporary Kyoto, a section will be addressed exactly to urban policies of the last decades aiming to restore not only the material but also the intangible spirit and values of the past in everyday life.

1   Brumann C., Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto - claiming a right to the past, London, 2012

Leica Store in Kyoto; an exaxmple of Machiya restoration for commercial activities

Leica Store in
Kyoto interiors;
an exaxmple of
Machiya
restoration for
commercial
activities

CONTEMPORARY KYOTO

02

Kyoto city center; justaxposition between old and new high rise buildings; (photography by the author)

The richest heritage in Japanese cities are history and natural landscape. Today it is losing part of this beauty especially in the city center, where building and streets do not differ so much from other Japanese cities. New constructions are little by little modifying and hiding the original landscape of the most historical city in Japan, but "very few of these interventions will be seen as negative by everyone, usually, some people benefit, often very considerably. The question is: How to reconcile these benefits with the losses of others? (...) in Japan Kyoto has been the forefront of this debate". The city itself is engaged in promoting various preservation programs. This chapter will focus of two policies released in the last decades, involving the safeguard of urban landscape and the regulation of dense urban districts.[1]

1   Brumann C., Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto - claiming a right to the past, London, 2012

TRACES OF THE PAST ON CONTEMPORARY URBAN SYSTEM

"Right to live with a perceptible past in everyday environment"

Kawarama-
chi dori;
(photogra-
phy by the
author)

The traces of the past in the contemporary of Kyoto can hardly be ignored. Capital of the Empire for more than a thousand years, almost unscathed survivor of the bombing of the Second World War, today it possesses an enviable artistic and historical patrimony. So far, naturally permeated, the desire to express its cultural and historical value has become more recent.

Of great interest is the way in which Japanese realities are placed towards conservation. This is not a matter of physical, but immaterial permanence. The rediscovery concerns not form, but inheritance of spirit. The cultural tradition is a line never broken in time, but certainly damaged. The factors are many, but surely the evolution over time of the urban organization has generated a gradual change in the way of living the city and social interactions. The passage analyzed in the previous chapter explains how in a frame of a few decades the Japanese cities have spent a period of total detachment from the past, marked by the modernization based on western example, and then re-approach their traditions. This is the silent claim of a social right: to live one's past in daily life. The reaction to the Second World War, the economic boom, the unbridled competition dictated by neo-liberalism, the advent of globalization, the fast growth of nearby cities such as Hong Kong, Shanghai and then Beijing. All these events contribute to the desire of Japan to compete in a global context, leading it to slowly lose its cultural identity, reflected in the urban organization. With the affirmation of Japan at the international level, it finally stops to think about the gap reached with respect to the local tradition. Thus, as a reaction to a neo-liberal policy, interest in tradition and its transmission from the past through the present and towards the future is born.

Introversion
dictated by
architecture

The awareness and the latent declaration of wanting to re-appropriate one's own past, needs a support from the city, from the political point of view without a doubt, but above all for how it conforms materially.

For too long the importance of the built form as a reflection generator of the lifestyle in the social and in the private has been neglected. Adapted to the Japanese context, this is a problem highlighted in the European cities by Cristina Bianchetti. [1] It deals with "the ambiguity of living together in an individualized society. These are cities seen as "a multitude of individualities, but aggregable". Introversion, individuality, are all consequences of a gradual change in the urban setting, due to the different factors described previously.

The city has changed almost unconsciously, until today's awakening of those who claim what has been lost along the path of change. The period of reconstruction, which sees the triumph of prefabricated houses, marks more than ever the involution of the city as a social space. The contrast between traditional and multi-storey prefabricated residences is evident. The interaction between inside and outside is annihilated. The historical relationship with the street, which has always been a fundamental element of everyday life, breaks down. The level of the road becomes the level of mobility. On the ground floor the cars reside, the residences starting from the first one are still closed inwards, opening to the outside only through windows that are often completely obscured.

The density is so high that it has annulled the possibility of cutting out social spaces in the various districts. With the exception of the center and the places dedicated to tourism, the functions are increasingly less differentiated. Kyoto is thus divided mainly into two lodgings, a tourism city and a dormitory city.

The social awakening and the support of politics to remedy a deleterious process, however, is decisive and fast. Only since 2007, the municipality is completely devoted to social retraining. Many of the interventions have already reached the desired success, many are still being implemented or planned. istrict by district, each with its own peculiarities, the city of Kyoto re-qualifies the society through the city.

1   Cristina Bianchetti, Spazi che contano - Il progetto urbanistico in epoca neo-liberale, Donzelli Editore, Roma, 2016

Re-elaborated scheme from Nishimuro Yukio illustration; changes in urban struture; from street level point of view
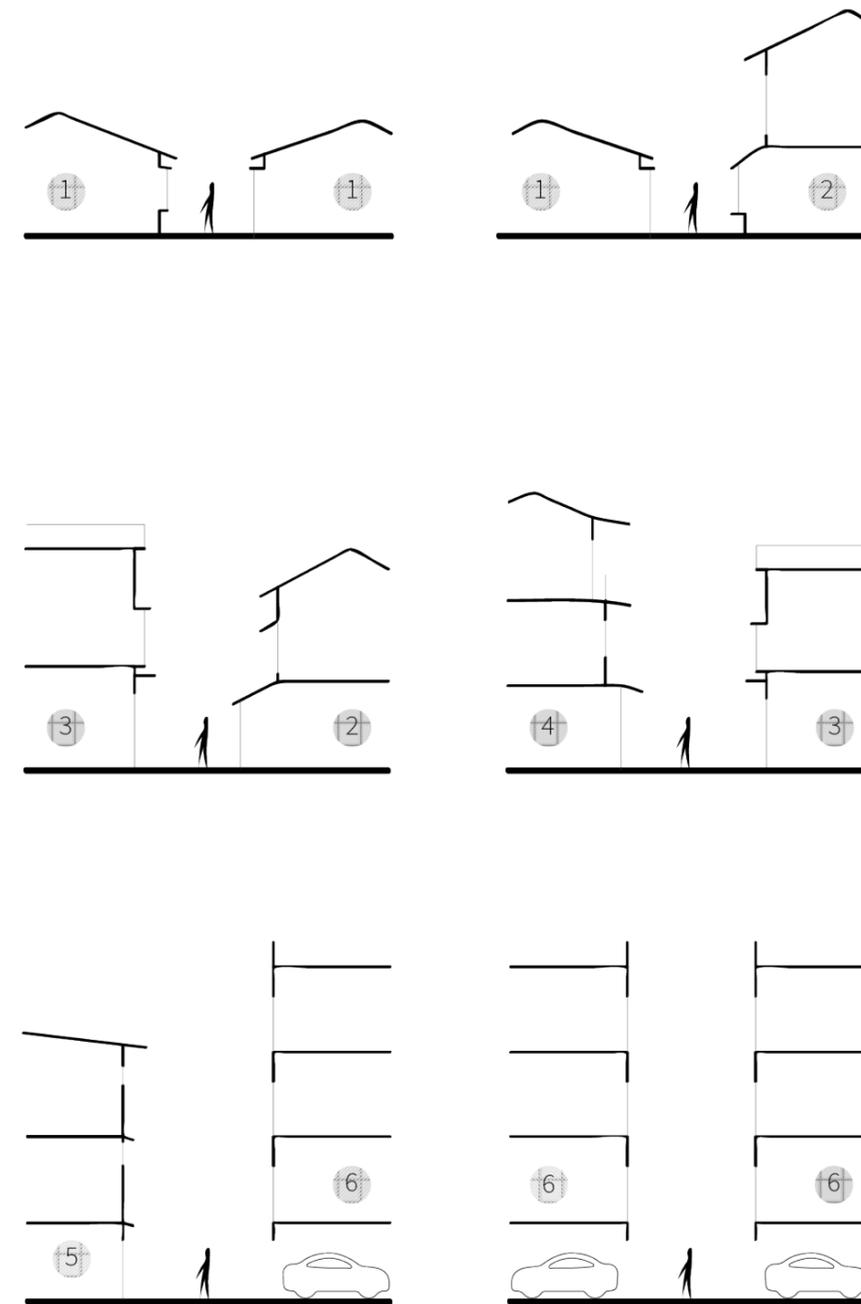
Views from
inside,
Kamigyo
Ward;
(photogra-
phy by the
author)

SOCIAL ACTIVISM

'Jichi rengokai' local autonomy associations

The social and urban redevelopment is not driven only from careful municipalities of Kyoto, but also by the knowledge of kyotoites themselves. The sense of community has always been present since the beginning and the small neighborhood associations 'jichi rengokai' have never ceased to be interested in their own small city in the city. The boundaries of these cities in the city are often coincident with those of the school districts, which include about 25 'chonai' each. The sense of community has always been elevated and applied to a strong activism in everyday life.

The only moment to stop their activity was immediately after the Second World War, when the American occupation abolished all its activities after having recognized its social influence. After this period of detention, the kyoto communities have recovered and nowadays elderly retired men still dominate the proceeding of a "vertical seniority-oriented organization".

Communities in Kyoto are strong and proud of the historical heritage of their city. At any rate, community activism is not only looking for a deserving preservation of historical townscape. What they are actually working on is, under the supervision of town-planning office, is 'machizukuri' (town making). They started a process of opposition or collaboration between locals and developers of new interventions in their neighborhood. After all town planning office declares: "Community revitalization must come first, once this is attained and local economy thrives, nobody will want to build 'manshon' anyway, and the townscape will recovery automatically".

"Community revitalization must come first, once this is attained and local economy thrives, nobody will want to build 'manshon' anyway, and the townscape will recovery automatically"

Nishijin Festival organized every year by the local community; phoyographer: Mizuno Kayu

KYOTO CITY LANDSCAPE POLICY

"Forming timeless Kyoto Landscapes - since September 2007"

Social activism is strongly supported by the Kyoto municipality, which in the last decades has been paying great attention to maintaining or restoring the city's historical and landscape heritage.

Starting from the 1967, when special preservation areas were designated under the Ancient Capital Cities Preservation Law. In 1972 a group of ordinances on Urban Landscape were established including the definition of large scale construction restriction zones and special preservation and improvement districts. In 1991-1992 the Committee for Kyoto Town Development on Land Use and Landscape Measures drew up a report containing all the fundamental concepts for northern preservation, city center revitalization and southern creation. Finally, in 1995 City Ordinances on the Betterment of Urban Landscape was established. From 1996 the number of landscape restriction districts has grown, the outdoor advertisement measures reinforced and the building height control reinforced.

Despite these efforts, many beautiful landscapes have been lost. Social changes seem to play an important role in this failure. First of all, changes in terms of values and lifestyle, but also economy and efficiency motivations have caused: loss of Kyo-machiya and other historical buildings, construction projects unfitting the surrounding cityscape, loss of sceneries, degradation of landscapes due to outdoor advertisements.

"Kyoto's community is interested in three different aspect, in relation to landscape preservation: foreseeing which landscapes in 50 to 100 years will remain relevant as a historical city in the future, considering landscape as a public asset in opposition to private buildings, taking the responsibility to inherit Kyoto's magnificent landscapes for future generations." (Town planning Bureau)

Kyoto city view from Kiyomizu Dera; Photographer: Felysia Nurul Istiqomah

Landscape policies suited to regional characteristics

The first step in drawing up the landscape policy has been dividing Kyoto region by region, depending on the peculiar characteristics of each one.

1- Mountainous and piedmont area, characterized by the presence of world heritage areas, historical buildings and scenic site areas.

2- Residential areas bordering mountainous area in which there are historical assets areas, residential areas, areas along main roads, waterfront and commercial areas.

3- Western region, mainly occupied by industries and residential areas

4- Southern region, a highly integrated area with industries, residences and commercial areas.

5 - Historical urban area distinguished by historical urban center district, commercial residential coexisted district, southern historical urban area, waterfront ad green area, historical heritage area, areas along main roads, western and southern urban areas, commercial areas.

6 - Eastern region occupied by residential areas and commercial areas.

Regions identified by Kyoto Municipality in relation to their peculiar features;
1:Mountainous and piedmont area,
2: Residential areas bordering mountainous,
3: Western Region,
4: Southern Region
5: Historical area,
6: Eastern Region

Framework of Kyoto city landscape policy

As underlined before, Kyoto townscapes trouble are quite often associated with manshon construction business. Starting from the bubble of 1980s, immediately catch the attention of wealthy kyotoites desiring a new urban lifestyle in the city center. But simultaneously, it was spreading a lack of popularity among those who were not inhabiting them. The immediate damages spotted were both during the working site because of its duration, then once built since the perpetual shadow on the neighborhood, the block of natural ventilation and natural light and to conclude the loss of visual privacy.

In order to avoid the spreading of this town trouble all over the city, the municipality has developed five essential points included in the landscape policy: building Height control districts; building design regulations; landscape regulation map; outdoor Advertisements Districts; preserving and Improving Historical Townscapes.

Building Height control districts.

The height of buildings is an important element that forms city landscape and environment. Maximum heights have been lowered over a wide range while segmenting height controls according to the areas characteristics. Maximum heights have been lowered for building height control districts in: Historical city areas, residential areas in mountain foothills and industrial areas. Considering the whole area of the city of Kyoto, Heights have been lowered in 30% of urbanization areas (approximately 15000 ha). Starting from the city center, where business is centered, maximum heights are gradually lowered toward the foothills of the three mountain regions. Formerly a height of 45 meters was reachable, currently is allowed a maximum height of 31 meters. The building height control districts policy is based on three main points: regulations suiting characteristics of each area, attention to difference in height with adjacent areas, consideration for both land use and scenery.

Maximum heights were lowered in nearly all areas of historical townscapes. Case in point is Kyo-machiya (Kyoto traditional townhouse) and the height of nearby buildings.

This system of rules strictly depends by streets depth.

Design Standards.

At the moment, the common standards include: roof palette, external wall material, balcony, external wall palette, gates/fences/hedges and other roof materials are in principle matte gray or matte black.

Vistas view preservation zones.

This part of the landscape policy focuses on the designation of significant views in order to preserve them from a specific point of view.

The "View preservation zones" are classified according to the regulation they need.

1 - "Vistas" view preservation zone: zones where building altitudes are set and may not be exceeded in order to leave the viewing element unobstructed from the viewing spot.

2 - Close view preservation zone: zones where shape, design and palette are regulated so that buildings within view from the viewing spot do not blemish the magnificent vistas view.

Historical townscapes preservation or improving.

In this process the city of Kyoto has two different approaches depending on the nature of the area or building involved in the preservation: Use district designation system, Preservation policy for single structures

Oike dori

Shijo dori

Gojo dori

orikawa dori   Karasuma dori   Kawaramachi dori

Centrally located artery roadside districts

From 45m heigh permitted to 31m

Commercial residential coexisted districts

From 31m heigh permitted to 15 m
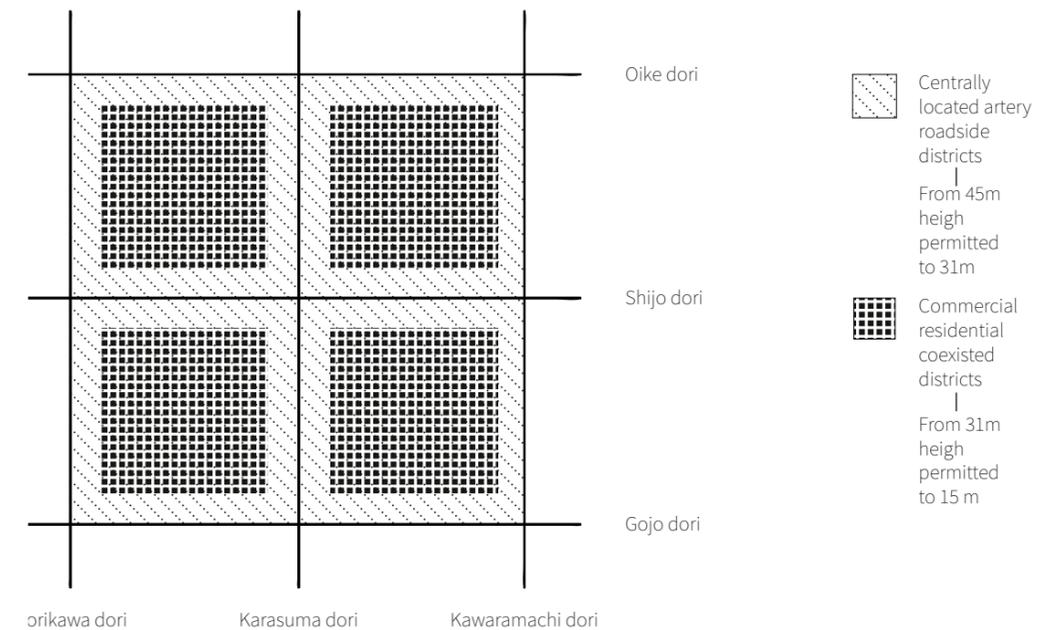
scheme about building height control updates over time

CITY REGULATION DEVELOPMENT

Although both the city and the population are united in a common purpose, that is to protect the historical and landscape heritage of the city, over time the building regulations have undergone changes, mainly driven by security reasons.

Roji, as they have historically established themselves in Japan, are now in an illegal context. The suggestive and intimate paths between the oldest houses in the city following the new regulations in force should no longer exist. Characterized by minimum widths, such as 1,70m for a maximum of 2,40, they must now conform to the new minimum width of 4.00m in order to guarantee the passage to rescue vehicles. The newly built homes must therefore distance themselves from the middle of the road at least 2,00m.

As explained in the previous chapter, the height of the buildings, again according to the new regulations in place since the 80s, is strictly connected to the width of the streets on which they face. Hence a chain of effects that sees the increase in building density, population, means of transport and so on. The widening of the road therefore becomes the primary cause of the loss of what the urban districts have always represented: intimacy and community.

The following chapter will illustrate the political program concerning the narrow streets characteristic of the densest urban districts. It will show how in spite of the updating of the regulations, the city of Kyoto will continue to commit itself to finding a solution of means not to disfigure the city's history, always cooperating with an active society.

max 2m

1
1.5

min 4m
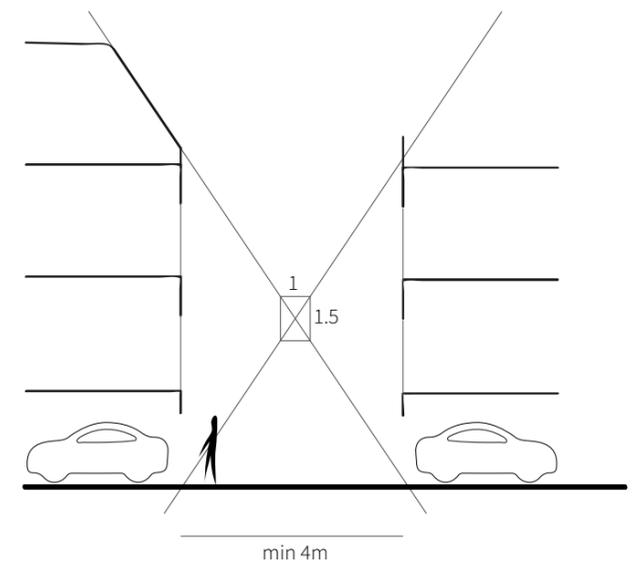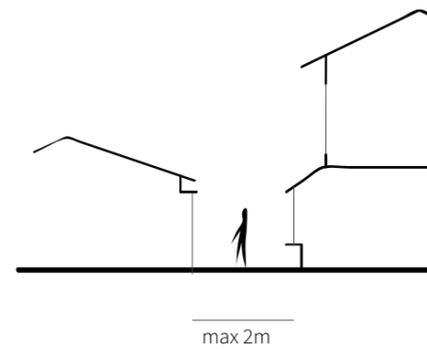
Relation
between
road width
and build-
ing height;
changes on
street level
perceptions

MEASURES FOR URBAN DISTRICTS AND 'ROJI'

"Disaster control town development with the power of community"

The interested areas are the ones where the development of roads and open space is not sufficient. In such areas, facilities are small and narrow, and issues related to the title to the land are complicated. In many cases residents or owners of apartments are aging and have difficulty in the reconstruction of buildings.

Starting from the current situation, the first step in changing the urban district structure is constructing new roads, open spaces, promoting of fireproofing buildings and establishment of town development bases as planned. Strengthening of disaster control system is also important because it takes time to achieve the objectives.
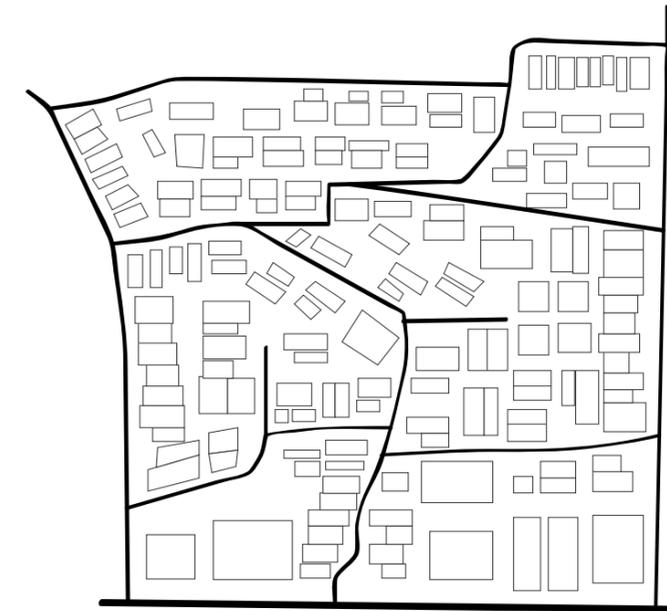
An exaple of urban district improvements; Above -beofre, Below - after

Urban
Districts in
Kyoto City

Populated urban districts with wooden buildings are widely distributed mainly in the old town that was less damaged during the War, and the areas that were urbanized without conducing land readjustment projects during the period from the postwar rebuilding to the era of high economic growth.

1 - City center/old Town: mostly characterized by the presence of dead-end roads.

2 - Nishijin area: areas where aged wooden buildings, such as Machiya, have remained. Conurbation consists of small plots of land in narrow backstreets including dead-end roads.

3 - Higashiyama-ku: Narrow Backstreets are here surviving and aged wooden buildings are concentrated.

4 - West Industrial Area: Modern sprawling area where the construction of factories and houses has been advanced simultaneously.

5 - Ukyo Chubu area: Sprawling area due to the "mini developments" since about 1995.

Urban
Districts
location
in Kyoto
City
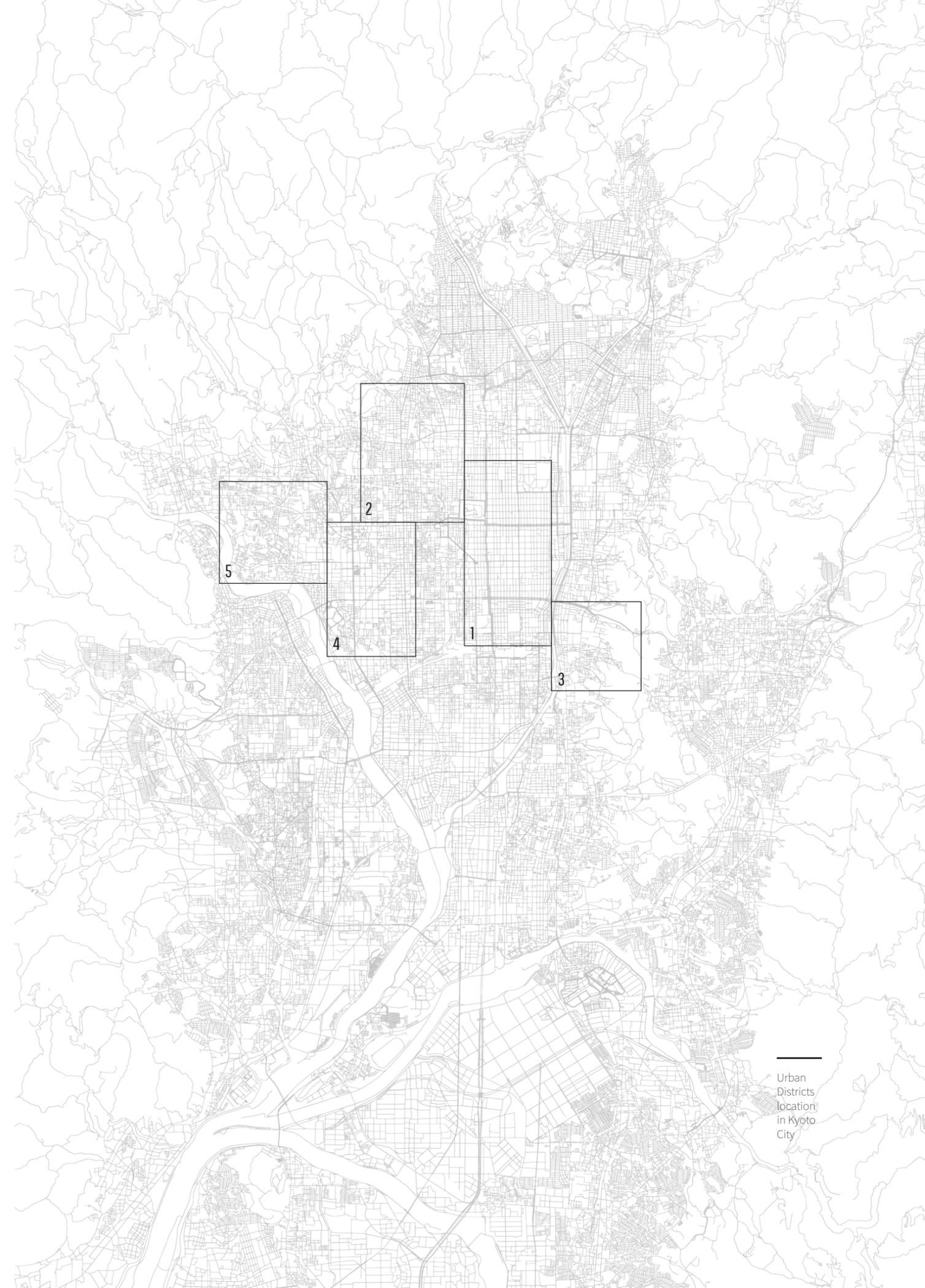
Measures
for Narrow
Backstreets

In high-density urban districts, the presence of the roji, with dimensions prior to the new regulations, entails a risk in the course of environmental disasters such as earthquakes or fires. The new regulations concerning the retreat of buildings at least 2 meters from the center of the road, concern new buildings, for those already existing the problem remains unsolved.

On the other hand, the presence of historical architectures shows the presence of very united and solid communities, also part of the historical heritage of Kyoto. Starting from this argument, thinking the right policy of intervention is a long process, that needs to deal with all the preconditions explained before.

"Applying uniform national measures may spoil the historical and cultural values of Kyoto. First of all, in order to maintain and inherit the traditional townscape and communities, measures incorporating renovation-type town development are required, to steadily improve safety, while taking care of the current townscape."
(Kyoto City Planning Office)

Furthermore, in the redevelopment plan there is an effort not to draw up standardized guidelines, as each single roji has very specific characteristics that should not be compromised or reduced to a standard.

The main objectives desired by the municipality are therefore to ascertain the adequate resistance to natural disasters, to ensure the continuity of the historical city over time, to continue to renew the city to make it comfortable for all citizens. All made possible by a system of guidelines designed specifically for the different cases of intervention and involving the respective neighborhood communities.

In this regard, the planning office has thus divided the city into three different macro areas: historical narrow backstreets, ordinary narrow backstreets, narrow backstreets under specific Disaster Control.

Historical Narrow Backstreets.

The main issues are related to the historical value they represent. First of all, providing road setback does not allow preservation of the continuous eaves and walls. Moreover, if reconstruction is not allowed, buildings cannot be preserved and renovated appropriately.

What the municipality is suggesting is to preserve historic landscapes, enable the maintenance and renovation of buildings, keeping the same width of roads.

Ordinary Narrow Backstreets.

Considering the type 2, the general narrow backstreets with houses that can be reconstructed under current laws and regulations, the spotted problems are the shrinkage of the space addressed to the services that makes difficult to assure good living spaces. Even in this case the setback will also cause the loss of the traditional townscape with the consequent loosing of community spaces.

In this case, the system of improvements aims to prepare various measures, such as road widening maintenance, enhancement of reconstruction by the relaxation of the setback rule, and preservation of townscape, and make them selectable according to each community's town planning.

Narrow Backstreets under disaster control.

The last typology, where reconstruction of buildings is not allowed under current laws and regulations, evokes other issues like the difficulty to provide proper renovation and maintenance of buildings, so that the dilapidation of buildings may advance and increase the risk of damage. What is proposed by the city policy is enable the reconstruction of buildings that can maintain safety and also enhance the supporting measures for the improvement of safety in evacuation.
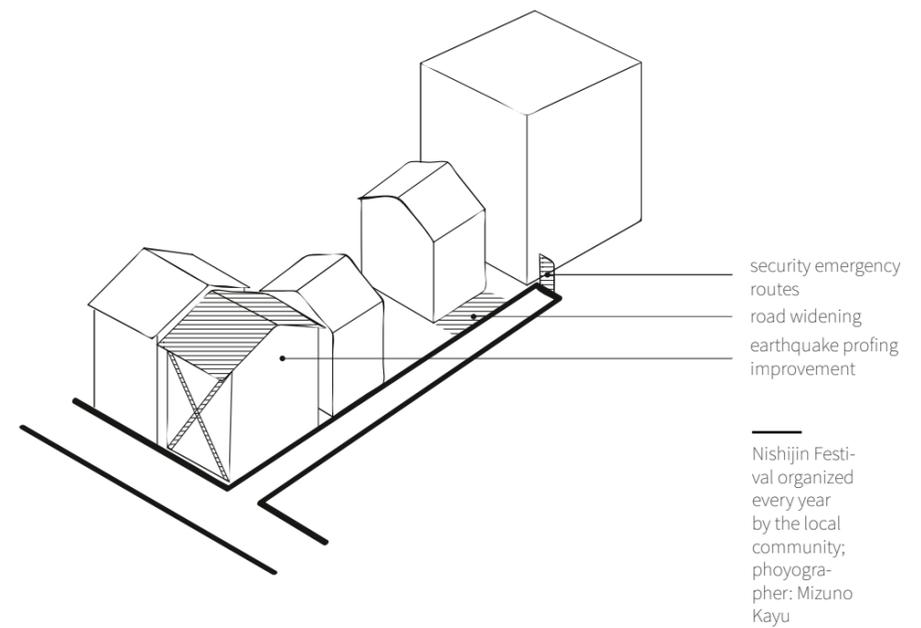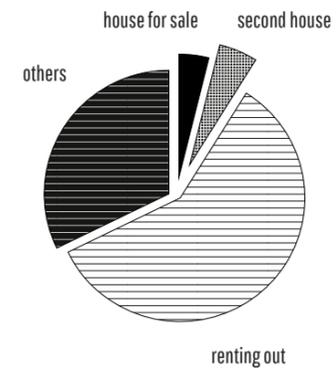
security emergency routes

road widening

earthquake profing improvement

Nishijin Festival organized every year by the local community; phoyographer: Mizuno Kayu

VACANT HOUSES
'AKIYA'

According to an inspection carried out by the Statistic Bureau of Japan, currently 8.2 millions of homes are uninhabited.

The causes are multiple. Among the main ones an aging population, the decrease of births, the migrations of young workers in different cities compared to that of birth and so on. Not only small rural settlements but also big cities like the capital Tokyo, are currently facing the problem of empty houses called Akiya. [1]

In the Kansai region, the problem is not so arduous as in other regions of Japan, but cities like Kyoto and Nara are anyway starting to adopt measures to reduce the number of vacant homes.

"Those who remodel empty houses there for living, businesses or community exchange purposes, including educational exchanges, and agree to use them for at least 10 years are eligible for subsidies (...) In the city's Higashiyama Ward, an area that includes popular tourist destinations like Yasaka Shrine, the traditional Gion district and Kiyomizu Temple, 22.5 percent of apartments and homes were officially listed as akiya in 2013, the highest percentage in the prefecture. "(Johnston 2016)

The funds given to the inhabitants or entrepreneur can cover one-third to one-half the costs of a basic renovation, depending on the purpose of the remodeling. In Kyoto is growing the Minpaku business. Minpaku stay means an unofficial guest house. It is a true experience in a traditional Japanese House hosted by locals.

While in Kyoto always more owners join the organization to regenerate empty houses for tourism residential purposes, in Nara a new a new plan has been announced. The city of Nara is more interested in community redevelopment than in tourism. The city will indeed offer assistance to developers that will remodel empty houses in hopes of creating more lodging facilities, such as restaurants, shops, art galleries and hands-on learning centers. (Johnston 2016)

It would be interesting seeing a similar approach in the city of Kyoto, where the interest is focusing by now most of all around tourism facilities, instead of locals quality of life.

"On the other hand, the akiya are an opportunity — and not just a business opportunity, but a chance to reimagine Japan's postwar culture of disposable housing and suburban sprawl. The akiya are a symbol of decline, yes, but they may also be the path to a better future." [2]

The Financial Times states that one cause of the akiya phenomenon is the nature of dwellings in Japan. Contrary to European trend to buy a second-hand house, in Japan is more typical to find families that build their own new house. That means a growing number of new houses that combined with a declining population provoke more akiya.

The social effects are undoubtedly regarding the quality of life in the neighborhood.

Robin Harding defines akiya as a cancer in the urban tissue, since it undermines not only the social life, but also the healthy condition.

Above:
www.stat.go.jp/data/jyutaku/2013/10_1.htm ;
Photographer: Masaaki Iwamoto; bloomberg.com

1   Eric Johnston, kansai uses subsidies to fill empty homes, but persuading aging population to pull up stakes remains a challenge, The Japan Times, 2016

2   Robin Harding, Is this the solution to Japan's glut of empty homes?, Financial Times, 2015

URBAN DISTRICT REGENERATION

03

This chapter will take into account the practice of urban regeneration concerning parts of the city involved in a deep economic decline followed by disinvestment and disrepair. Most of them clearly demonstrates "*that a combination of new cultural activities, new residencies and the adherence to urban design principles creates successful places, even in formerly peripheral locations.*" (Montgomery,2005)

The aim is demonstrating how regenerated cultural districts tend to share the attributes of good urban places, offering beneficial and self-sustaining combination of activities. [1]

1   John Montgomery, *Dublin, Sheffield, Manchester and Adelaide: Cultural quarters as mechanism for urban regeneration*, City Edge Esher Charlesworth,2005

Delhi, India

Kalyanpuri Block

This first case is a residecential block placed in the east side of New Delhi. It conists of a walled encolusre formed by single-roomed houses served by a tangled network of narrow tortuous alleys.This system forms a cluster of single celled dwelling and corresponding terraces. Each cell, approximately 2.5 x 3.5 meters in plan is surrounded by contiguous walls on three sides and is opened to the alley or a court on the fourth and last side.[1]

It is clearly a case of gated community, that is not representing similarities with the kyotoites neighborhoods. But observing the movements, the paths and the lifestyle of its inhabitants, it is quite interesting notice how their opening to the exterior is happening in the same manner.

Another curious feature is the one hoped for the japanese lifestyle in the next future. In "Learning from Delhi", Mitchell Maurice states that "all communal activities take place in the alley"
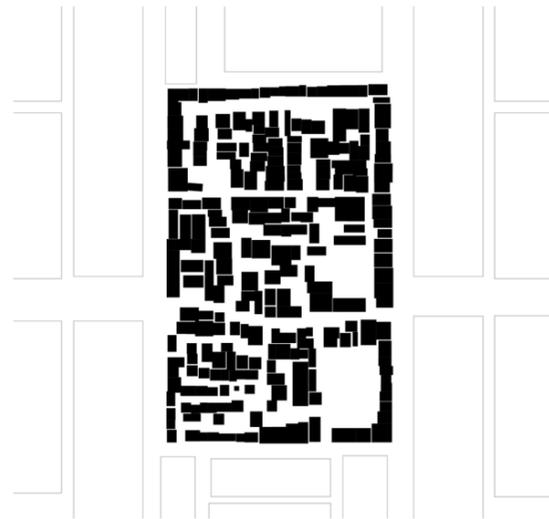
Brahmpuri

In Brahmpuri district, this time in the north side of the Indian capital, what is capturing attention is the circulation system.

Composed by dead end roads, this neighborhood easily traversed only by locals. The inhabitants themselves always suggest to the passerby that the best way to cross the district is trough terraces.The new circulation system, created through the time and defined by locals' habits could be seen therefore as a democratic raising of paths.
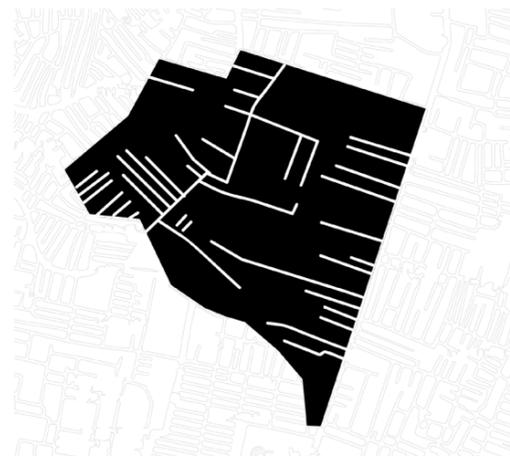
1   Maurice, Shamoon, Tang Bo, *Learning from Delhi,* 2010

Jagdamba Camp

Jagdamba Camp is a linear slum built on a marginal land in New Delhi. This settlement is 500 meters by approximately 40 meters wide and it has developed especially during the last decades hosting nowadays more than 6000 people. It lies along a natural drainage channel of the indian capital. To solve the problem of flood the inhabitants has reinforced the borders with solid bricks retaining walls. Sometimes the wall is even topped with chain linked fencing laced with exotic plants.

The narrowness of linear streets, combining with the presence of border walls, has caused the lack of easy access in case of fire, riot or other emergencies. The city of Kyoto is working exactly on the same problems, with the add of the huge risk of heartquakes. The settlement is composed by linear blocks of brick houses either backed up against the long retaining walls or placed back to back in an extended terrace over the drainage channel.

The features in common with Kyoto urban districts are mainly two. The first one is the presence of tight narrow linear pedestrian footways as the only meaning of connection among the dwellings. The consequent second carachterist is the deep lack of public spaces due to the high density of buildings coexisting with cramped connection paths.
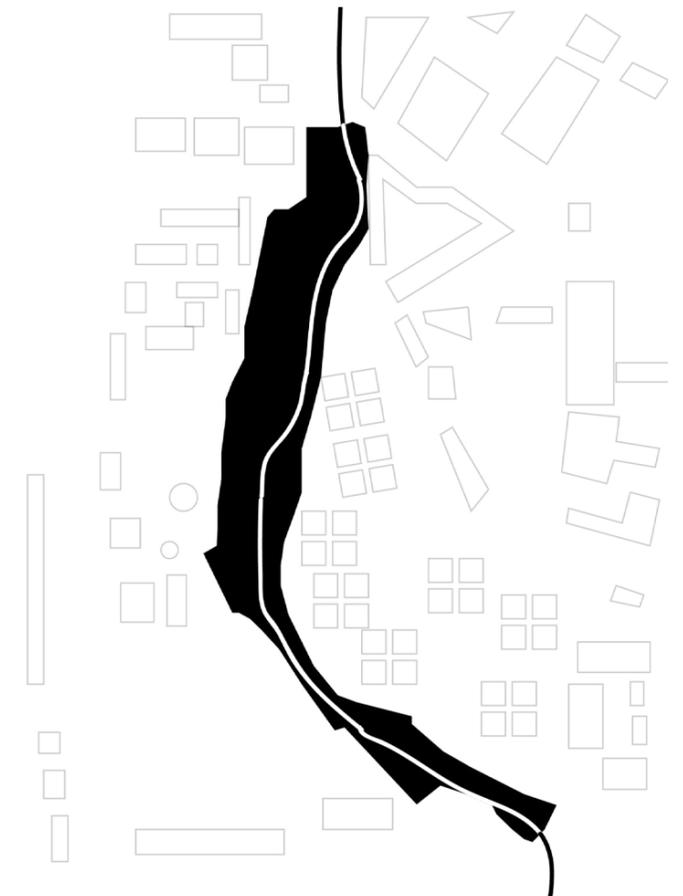
# COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Bruce
Nauman;
Moma
Exhibition

Yogyakarta, Indonesia

PUBLIC   PRIVATE

HOUSE 1   HOUSE 2   HOUSE 3

PUBLIC
PASSAGE

HOUSE 1   HOUSE 2   HOUSE 3
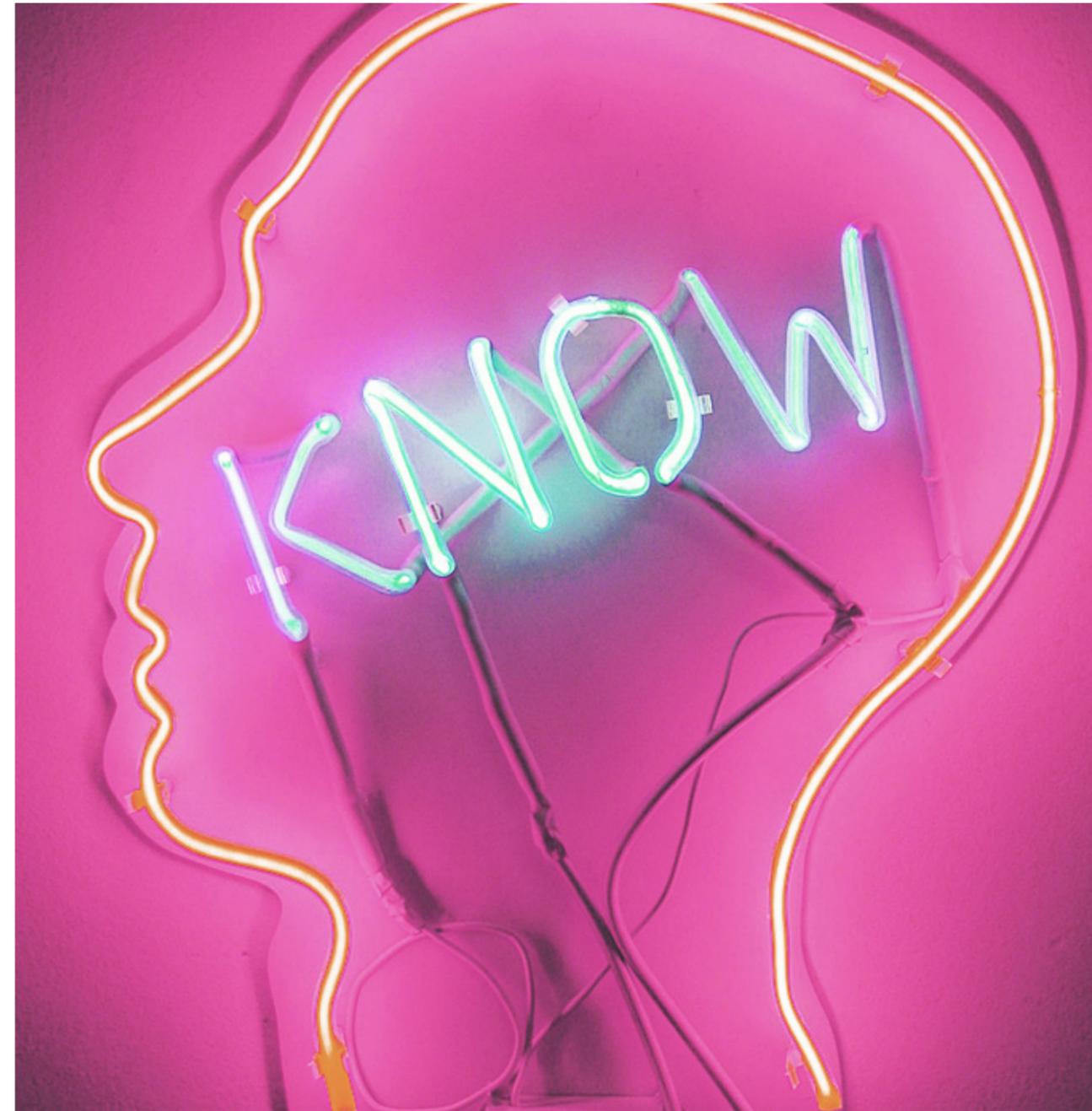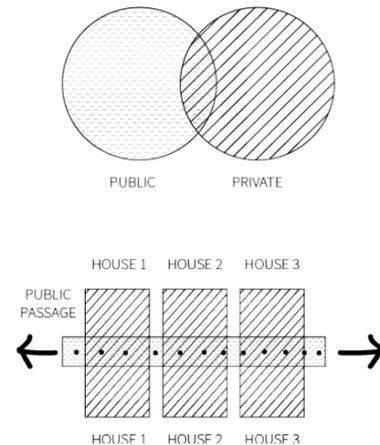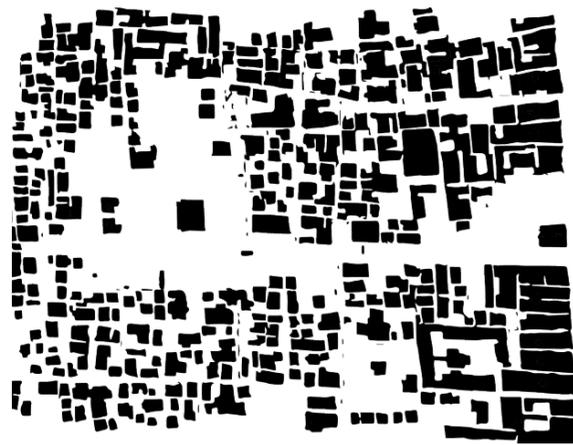
Kotagede is located about five kilometers in the south of the Yogyakarta city center. It began to grow at the end of the Sixteenth century. Although the numorous changes and developments, it still remains the same spatial arrangement and the built environment appearance.

"*Narrow walled alleys become the most prominent feature, shared spaces are always found in each house group, public accesses passing private properties.*" (Santosa, 2007).

The case of Kotagede district, in Yogyakarta, is an example of participate policies in order to preserve the historical heritage, to improve the tourism business, to promote social awarness during natural disasters. Yogyakarta and Kyoto are engaged in "Sister CIty Development Program". The community has been involved in several map making activities. What they are actually investigating is their own territory by mapping the district. Since 2013 the Airasia Foundation has supported the project team Arkomjogja and the community to initiate a community-based Conservation Project in Jagalan Kotagede.

The conservation project combines the resources of community groups and tourism business actors to help realise Kotagede's 'market value' in the context of cultural tourism, and develop heritage tourism potential in Indonesia. [1]

Another feature in common with Kyoto Typical urban districts is the dominance of the built environment compared with the natural setting. Increasing demand for housing is the reason of an high density of buildings.

Nevertheless they have already solve an issue that still remains in Kyoto city: the resulting space between buildings becomes naturally a shared public space.

1 Community Architects Network

Lukang, Taiwan
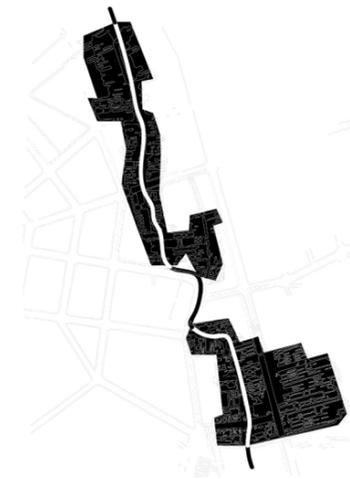
Next to Tainan and Mengjia, Lugang is the second greatest historical town in Taiwan with at least a 350 year history. It is located in Changhua County in central Taiwan. Unlike Tainan's historical with modern mixes, Lugang has no high-rise buildings. It has only Quan and Zhang regional buildings with Baroque-styled architecture.

This case can be easily compared with the most historical neighborhoods in Kyoto. Many temples and buildings from the past still stand making local people aware of their past. This is a non-common feature in asian cities, where the economic development has caused a fast and irreversible changing in terms of urban architecture.

Here is possible to notice how history persists and still remains clear to locals and visitors. The two characteristics of Lugang still visible are "No sky", "No Gorund" (不見天，不見地).The most typical road in Lugang called Zhongshan is a clear example of "no sky" since it is cut by crossing volumes at the upper level making the view of passersby obstructed. Furthermore, because of the use of the same red bricks both for walls and the street, the ground cannot be immediately recognized, "No Ground".

After a period of economical suffering, being one of the few Taiwanese cities to be not involved in the economic boom, now local administrations and its inhabitants have improved the tourism business. It has been finally recognized as the strong point of this historical spot in Taiwan.

Tianzifang,
Shangai
China
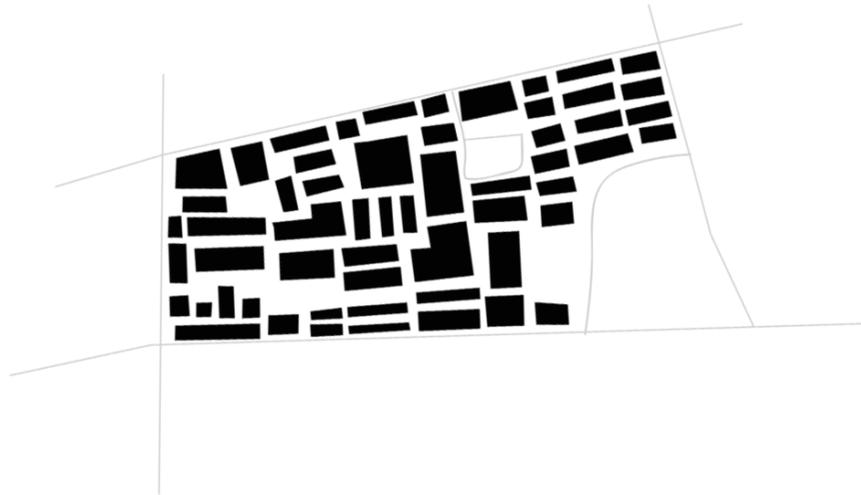
Tianzifang is a traditional neighborhood in Shangai involved in a community- initiated rehabilitatation, wich has conserved traditional residential houses and old factories, converting them into a community for creative industry.

It was originally a factory lane, since six different factories were taking place in it. When the value of the factories went down and those enterprises sold their buildings, many local artists such as Chen Yifei, moved in this neighborhood, converting factories' structures into their studio.

From that moment, the number of artists interested in opening their studio there increased. Beside the factory lane, two more lanes became part of the artists settlement.

Expansion of the area for non-residential use continued and reached into the next lane and, in April 2005, the municipal government proclaimed Tianzifang as a district of Shanghai of concentrated creative industry. During the expansion in 2007 and 2008, non-residential use

was extended to include more commercial types such as bars, restaurants and retailers, which added a more contemporary fashionable atmosphere. As of 2011, there are 671 households (about 2000 people), of which only 100 are original inhabitants; 403 have rented to enterprises, and 250 have rented to shop workers or warehouses. Tianzifang has attracted over 70 enterprises from 18 countries and regions, and formed creative industrial features that center on interior design, visual arts and industrial arts. [1]

It is impressive to see how the identity of the place still remains but advancing in time and referring to another sector of production. All this features make Tianzifang become a multi-faced location with a fusion of history, culture and local living environment. The Shanghai Municipal Government has appointed Tianzifang as the Shanghai Creative Industry Park since 2009 (Zhu, 2009)

1   Yung, Chan, Xu, Sustainable Development and the Rehabilitation of a Historic Urban District – Social Sustainability in the Case of Tianzifang in Shanghai, 2014

Shi Cha Hai Hutong,
Beijing
China
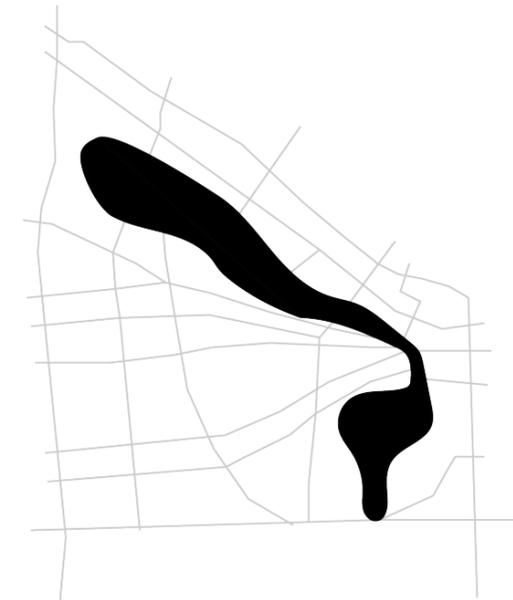
As in many Asian cities, urban renewal interventions have caused the loss of original city landscapes. In Beijing, as in the japanese capital, one of the features that is being little by little erased is the Hutong districts. Chinese Hutong are the parallel of Japanese Rojis, the narrow alleys that represent not only a special neighborhood organization, but also a disappearing pattern of life. Always more Hutongs are being demolished in order to make way for skyscrapers or high-rise apartments.

While it is possible to modernize the hutong, the costs of modernization that retain the character of these areas are high, and might be higher than the costs of total reconstruction of an area. [1]

There is a growing recognition that the hutong rep-

resents something that is a peculiar and strong characteristic of 'urban Chinese' and "thus protecting the hutong is a means of retaining 'difference' that will help to sustain a sense of heritage and a tourist attraction" (Le, 2006; Wang, 1997)

Shi Cha Hai is an example of preserving the local community pattern present in Shi Cha for decades.. Until 2006 it seemed to be still possible, but with the growth of tourism and since the good location next to the forbidden city, costs of life increased and many locals were therefore forced to move in other parts of the city. The image of a place can change radically trough the remarkable income of tourism. The neighborhood changes its daily patterns of lives and begins to change the kind of offers in its commercial activities. It starts to think about what the tourists need paying no more attention to locals demand.

1   Humin Gu, Chris Ryan, Place attachment, identity and community impacts of tourism - the case of a Beijing Hutong, 2008

Bukchon Hanok Village
Seoul, Korea

The case of Bukchon village is about a process of social and governmental awareness about the historical and social value of an old district in Seoul. During the 1990s fast urban development, the risk to lose the traditional asset of urban districts was elevated. Losing them meant to lose part of cultural heritage and traditional lifestyle.

The small alleys of Bukchon stretched with housings along them, were the venue of daily lives.

An alley is truly a common yard shared by all the residents. Thanks to a precious attention about this patrimony, the alleys in Bukchon are still valuable as a landscape representing the history of Seoul.

The local community has been really involved in the process. 'Bukchon Preservation Group' requested a solution for Bukchon's debilitating in 1999. It marked the beginning of a completely new approach to solve the problem of Bukchon on the basis of cooperative partnership between residents, experts and the city government.

Under the "Urban Management Plan of 1999, it was proposed that the city government should purchase valuable traditional housings (Hanok), repair them and restore the budget by selling or renting them out, in an attempt to preserve historical values of Bukchon. To compensate for Hanok preservation, it was suggested that the city government should execute streetscape improvement projects on small alleys in Buchon and provide public parking lots and other community facilities for the convenience of residents. (Hyun-Suk Min 2014)

Over the course of preservation project, more and more local residents and NGOs became interested in Hanoks of Bukchon and volunteer protection activities increased. The success of Bukchon project showed how civil society can participate in urban designing process on its own initiative.

The public awareness on the value of Bukchon has also been raised. It had a great influence the series of events organized by the community itself: folkloristic workshops, meetings in the Hanok cultural center, arts events and the foundations of various associations. The number of visitors and tourists is constantly increasing as Bukchon becomes a major tourist spot of Seoul.

Mouraria,
Lisbon
Portugal

Mouraria is a traditional district in Lisbon that has been suffering in the last decades because of political and urban issues.

Since 1974, the center of Lisbon has been one of the most intense emigration among European capitals : a negative balance of 300.ooo resident in 35 years, settled but not interrupted, towards the surrounding metropolitan area. [1]

In the 1990s the administration focused on urban actions to reverse the demographic trend.

The mechanism designed to attract residents involves the activation of public space through a participatory model that drives the inhabitants to promote or interact with small scale. The neighborhood of Mouraria up to ten years ago was a pole of prostitution and drug trafficking. It was characterized by a confusing urban fabric, abandoned by residents and illegally occupied by illegal immigrants.

In 2011 a interesting process of urban and social regeneration finally begun. It consists in a 7 years program with a budget of 4 million euro. that underlines 67 priority areas of intervention in the whole capital.

At the same time, the BIP-ZIP program has been activated , with a pilot funding of 1 million in 2011 and then increased by 50% to launch small scale projects proposed by at least two local actors and to be completed by one year. Mouraria itself counts already 17 prjects in just 6 years. Each intervention must promote the social improvement of the neighborhood by leveraging public space involving the resident population. (Barale 2017)

Some of them are quite fascinating such as the popular kitchen, the community house, Intendente avenue, the project "from the house to the alley", historical Lisbon, Ideal Atelier, "Lots of fruits", Lisbon Arts and Crafts.

---

1   Michele Barale, City portraits. In Lisbon the ransom of the center passes by Mouraria, 2017

http://www.renovaramouraria.pt

Favara, Sicily
Italy

The case of Favara in Sicily is an Italian example of revitalization of an old and almost abandoned village after the second world war. It is not so common to see a participation like the one shown by locals in Favara. The trigger event was the collapse of two buildings in the historic centre in 2010. This fact led two local philanthropists into action. Andrea Bartoli and his wife Florinda Saieva formed a teamwork to initiate a process of recovery with the goal to provide a new meaning to the area by involving artists and designers. Passing from criticality to opportunity as a source of urban resilience, they have been creating a hub of contemporary art in Sicily.   Under the name of Farm Cultural Park, a private cultural institution was founded in June. Its task is to give a new identity to Favara trough a project of social utility driven by a sus-

tainable development. The masterplan involved 5000 mq for exhibition spaces, artists residencies, co-work, enterprises, restaurants and shops. It has been drawn up by a local architect Enzo Castelli and Salvador John A. Liotta, who focused on the rehabilitation of an area called "Sette Cortili". Fragmented over time, the urban tree structure with seven courtyards have been finally re-unified.

" In a place marked by inurement and distrust towards the possibility of change, this rapid and continuous metamorphosis has stimulated people to change their perspective on these abandoned areas, from statica to dynamic standpoint, thus activating their belief in change" (Faraci 2016)

JAPANESE PROJECTS

After analyzing the previous case studies, selected among various cases out from Japan, here some interventions of the last decade in Japan.

The choice to analyze them separately is made in order to highlight some differences in terms of intentions, needs and mode of intervention. The act of regeneration has different facets and this is its highest value, since it can give different responses in relation to the nature of the issues.Observing European case studies, it is possible to notice how regeneration deals often with revitalization of old city centers abandoned after the Second World War or suburbs of industrial cities where factories moved away from leaving their building never used again. In these situations, the solution given by regeneration plan developer is always connected with the re-use of existing buildings introducing new functions in order to attract a new public to the place, often excluding the original residents. Functions inserted are often connected with arts, food, commercial activities and residential apartments. A new life is given to a dead land.

Here forward some examples of a different face of regeneration. It is remarkable the difference with the Japanese approach. Japan cities are dense. Dwellings are always demolished in order to be constructed again respecting the original dimensions or creating a new and bigger space for high-rise buildings. As visible, regeneration is here acting in terms of re-use of existing buildings with the final aim to relaunch the district activities creating an active network included in a walkable boundary. Through punctual interventions spread in an enclosed area, it could be defined a pointillism regeneration sometimes directed to tourists, but more often to locals.

Hanare,
Tokyo

In 2012, in occasion of Hagiennare, an art event orrganized by the Tokyo University students in an old wooden building in Yanakaa, Mitsuyoshi Miyazaki has presented his project of reuse to the owner of this builing that was going to be demolished in some months.

The architect get ispired from an italian "albergo diffuso", caracterized by the disolocation of all the services offered by the structure. The concept used by tthe designers is "the town as a hotel".

Trough his activity the architect, in collaboration with his associates, he has revitalized the whole neighborhood, creating a network of services offered by the local activities.

The building included in the project already contain various services: rental rooms, cafeteria, art gallery, arts and crafts shop and restaurants all condensed in two true japanese wooden building.

Added to the core of the hotel, all neighborhood activities are mapped, giving the chance to visitors to reach all the primary services for their tours (bike rental, restaurants, souvenir shops) or just to enjoy the tipical japanese neighborhood life (sento, arts and crafts workshop, traditional lodging solutions).

It should be considered that his target is strictly connected with tourism, and altought they could lose their autenthic spirit in living the city.
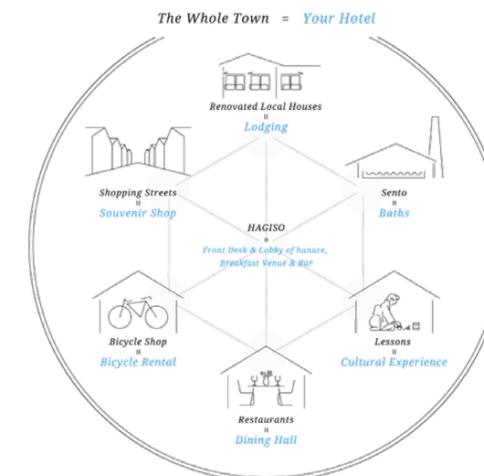
Left, cafe and art galley of one of the lodging; right scheme of services in the neighborhood

Babakkawa Shared Flat
Toshiaki Ishida

After winning the architectural competition launched by the city of Maebashi, The architect Toshiaki has developed his action plan to re activating the city through the use of vacant houses and properties. The main project of his intervention is the "share flat Babakkawa", thought for university students. The aim of the project was outlining *"a place able to provide students with social experiences, thus leading to enhancing the liveliness of the town.* "[1]

Introduced in a serie of project to be regarding vacant plots, Babakkawa Building was completed in 2014.

The city plan in this case is regarding the decline of the nine shop streets in Maebashi. After the end of the economic bubble, many activities closed, leaving a vacant place or abandoned buildings. The Shared Flat Babakkawa is a good example of rehabilitation of multi-tenant building, converting it into a residential building for students. It has became the frontrunner project of Maebashi Vision, a City Council project focused on the proposals of new project based on the same concept "places for cultivating quality", such as hotels, museums, cafe, Japanese traditional shops.

---

1   Toshiaki Ishida, The Japan Architect, n.103

Left, living room of the shared flat; right Map around Maebashi Station;

The grid of Santen
403 architecture

Starting from 2011, 403 architecture office is involved in a kind of organic connection between places and people made possible by their design project already spread in the district. Still respecting old existing buildings, they are inserting their presence working with various people already living there or owing little commercial activities. The aim is creating an array of places easily reachable walking from one spot to another.
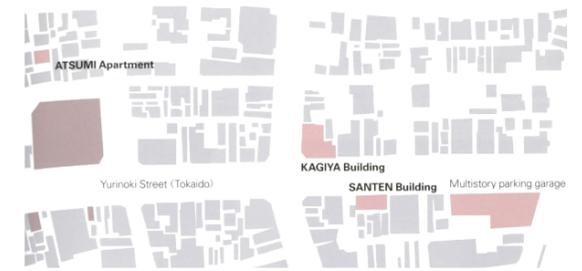
In this page: an hair salon trasformed in home for the owner and an open space to host live events or art exposition;
next page: above:map of the district showing the buildings involved in the re-design process;
below: local shops and multifunctional spaces

WATER IN JAPAN

04

This chapter will take into account the value thath historically cover the element of water in japanese culture and lifestyle.

Since the beginning of the Empire, water is present in urban architecture, natural landscapes and everdyday activities involving the communities in shared moments.

Here below a reportage of water connected places in Kyoto Prefecture done during the monthly experience of research in the Graduate School of Global and Environmental Studies PHD laboratory.

IMPERIAL GARDENS

Left: Nijo Castle
Garden; right:
Imperial Palace
Garden; (pho-
tography by the
author)

TEMPLES

Kinkakuji
Shrine
surrounded
by water;
(photogra-
phy by the
author)

Worshippers
letting their
prayers go
in the river.
Shimogamu
Jinja;
(photogra-
phy by the
author)

COUNTRYSIDE

Rice Field in
the backyard
of the house
in Wakayama
Prefecture.
(photogra-
phy by the
author)

LEISURE

View of
Dotonbori
riversides
from Ebisu
Bridge in
Osaka;
(photogra-
phy by the
author)

TEA HOUSES

SENTO

Differently from Onsen that are Japanese natural hot springs, Sento are the urban public bath. Since the beginning thought as a place of purification but undireclty useful for social interactions.

Born from the practice of soaking in these thermal baths for healing, spirituality and rejuvenation stems back to when Buddhism spread to Japan in the 500s.

"Nowadaysneighborhood sento are on decline and simultaneously there is an increasing number of young people and people of all ages rediscovering that practice." [1]

1   Attilio Michele De Palma, Living in Roji Alleys: smallness, sharing and public space", 2016

RIVERSIDE THROUGH THE TIME

17th
Century
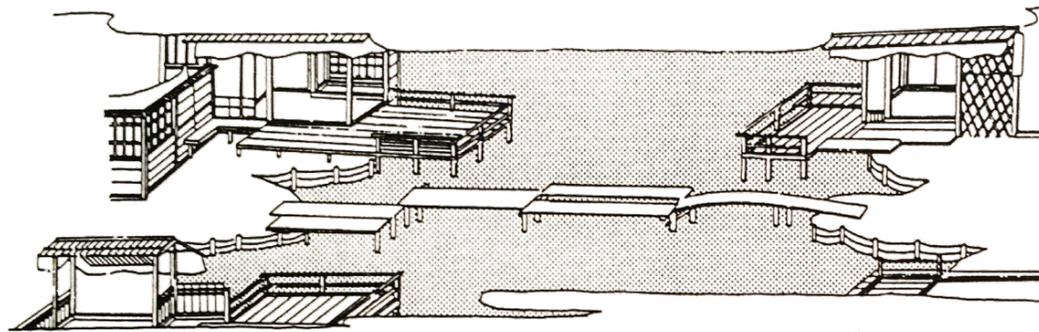
In this page:
Riverside buildings from the Shijokawara scroll;
Next page: 17th century screen painting, Kamo River

18th
Century

生洲

生洲といふハ高瀬川筋三條の
水にあり川魚を捕らへ入るゝ
とて黒き網を打て客とのへ
句へば客と商ひ生洲を入みて
即座にとりて調て客にもた
ちまらふ又ハ婦人の客あらハ
三弦の音曲を奏てたのしむ
い所の撰ともんつ仕あゐ
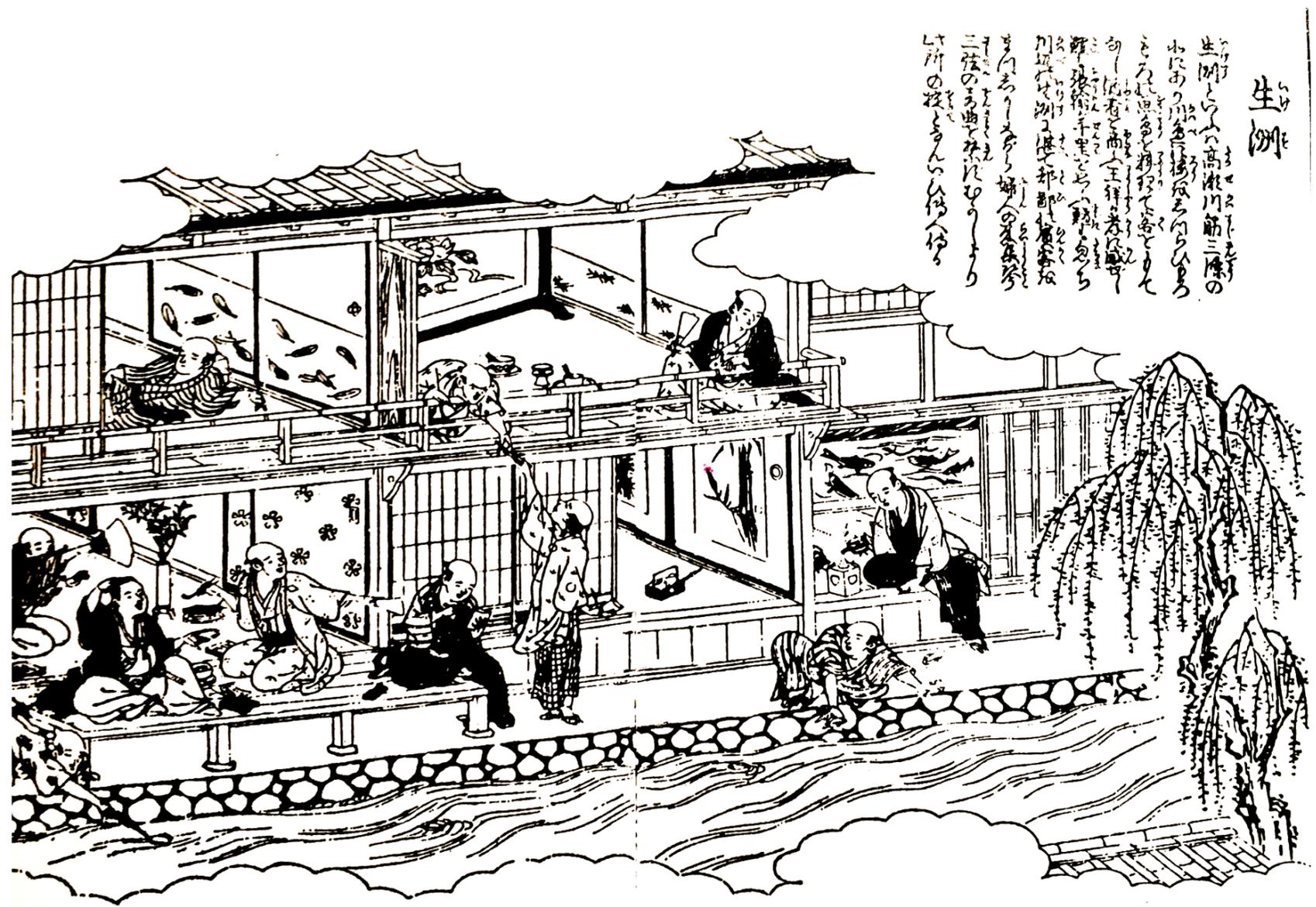
Shijokawara,
Ando Hiro-
shige, early
19th century

Today

In this page
and in the
next: Kamo
River Today;
(photogra-
phy by the
author)

A recent example of riversides regeneration along Horikawa Dori; (photography by the author)

PROJECT SITE

05

JAPANESE DECISIONAL HIERARCHY

Verticality Horizontality

Formally, Japan is a hereditary parliamentary monarchy, but the role of the emperor is exclusively symbolic since 1946. The succession takes place according to the male line of the imperial family; in case of lack of power, the emperor can be chosen within four families of princes of the same rank as the imperial house. The Japanese institutional order is therefore identifiable with modern parliamentary democracies; in comparison, there is a more marked differentiation of powers (legislative, executive, judicial), due to the influence of the United States during the drafting of the constitution. The nomination of the Prime Minister is also due to the emperor, at least nominally, based on the outcome of the electoral consultations.

The prefectures were introduced by the Meiji government in 1871 with the abolition of the han system. The previous partitions were more than 300 and were officially replaced by 47 prefectures in 1888.

The Local Autonomy Law of 1947 gave greater political power to the provinces and provided for the election of local governors.

In 2003, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi proposed to reorganize the provinces' system by including them in about 10 regions, whose degree of autonomy is greater than that of the existing prefectures. According to the Local Autonomy Law in force, each province is divided into cities and districts. Each district is further divided into neighborhoods and villages.

Although the vertically subdivision is common to many administrations, the Japanese organization is distinguished by the degree of decisional and managerial autonomy of its various subdivisions. Starting from the regions up to the school districts, the verticality of the decision-making power is flanked by an equally important horizontality that makes the individual parts almost completely autonomous on the basis of the national guidelines.

Scheme explaining decisional path

Emperor

state of Japan

prefectures

cities

city wards

urban districts
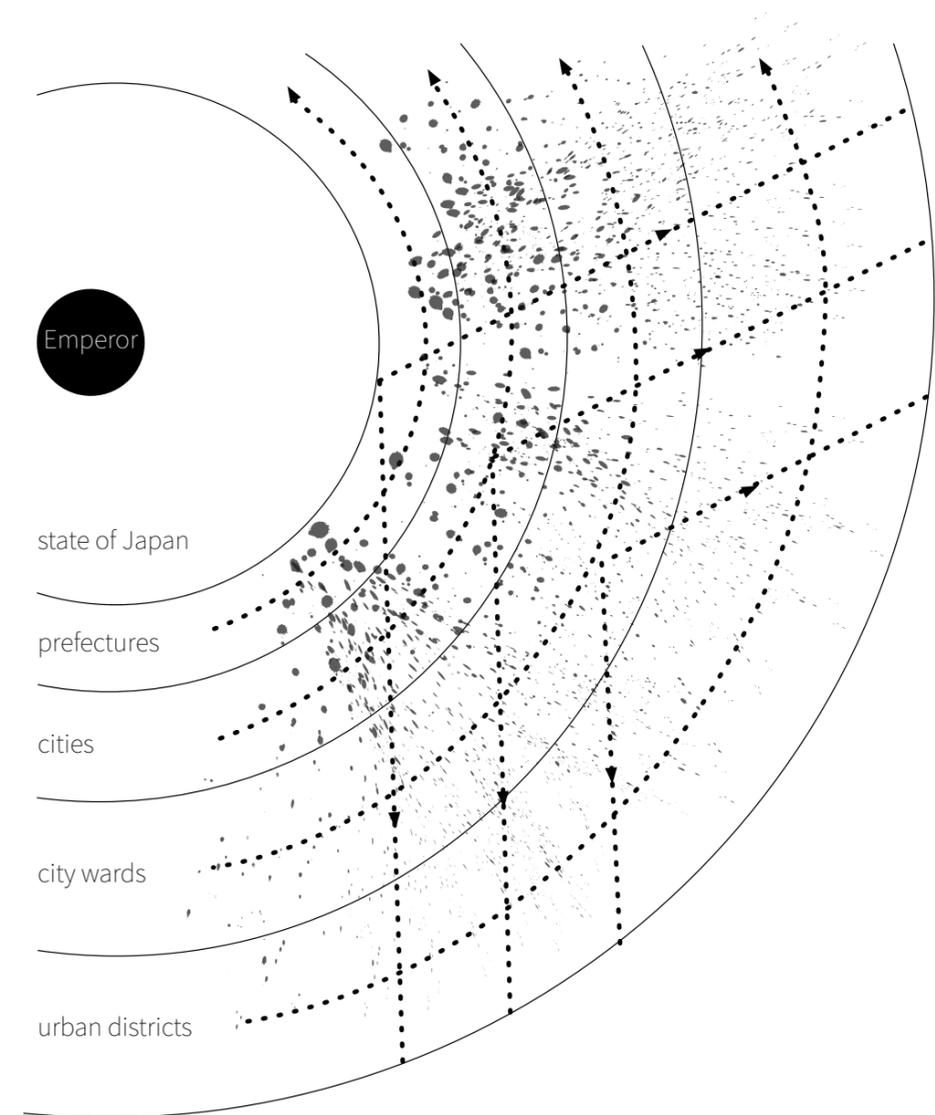
DISTRICT AUTONOMY

Bangumi

Kyoto Prefectural Government renamed 'Chogumi' inherited from Muromachi period in Bangumi during the Meji period (1868-1912). In addition, the City decided to encouraged community autonomy. Bangumi communities became therefore always stronger and consolidated. Just in Kamigyo and Shimogyo 33 Bangumi communities were formed.

From 1868, each Bangumi started to have a notable economic autonomy. Cho-shikimoku, which was formulated in Meiji Era, contained an article about the community tax collected for being used in the community.

The most important event is the establishment of elementary schools with their own budget for the first time in Japan.

These schools covered not only educational needs but also played other significant civic roles such as family registration offices and meeting places for communities. Residents of Bangumi established a company called Shogakko Kaisha or elementary school company to raise fund for the maintenance of school building, recruiting teachers, and community management.

Such activities to support school operations continued even after Bangumi were converted to school zone system.

"Today 11 Bangumi of the original 64 became junior high-schools under the revised system after the Second World War. Nowadays, even half of the old school zones are not left in their original form of old school zones because some schools have been integrated with others. However, old school zone system still prevails as a unit for community activities. They are engaged in sports, fire prevention, women activities, senior citizens activities, child guidance, welfare, traffic safety and several other activities. Therefore, schools are regarded as the centre for such social activities." [1]

1   Town Hall, *"The historical scenic beauty of Kyoto to be maintained and improved"*

Kyoto
Bangumi
school
districts
map

WARDS TO BE REGENERATED

As analyzed in the second chapter (see page 48-54) Kyoto City is constantly working on the regeneration of populated urban districts, composed most of all by with wooden buildings.

Starting from the guidelines given by the national government Kyoto Administration has finally highlighted 5 areas of interventions.

Spread in different part of the territory, the pointed out areas are consequently characterized by different needs expected by the regeneration intervention.

1 - North-Est Ukyo and South Kita: Mostly occupied buy residential wooden buildings, but not one of the most dense part of the city. Sprawling area due to the "mini developments" since about 1995.

2 - Kamigyo: chiefly a residential district.

3 - Higashiyama-ku: Historical and touristic ward, attracting notable flow of tourism.

North east Ukyo

South Kita

Kamigyo

Nakagyo

Higashiyama
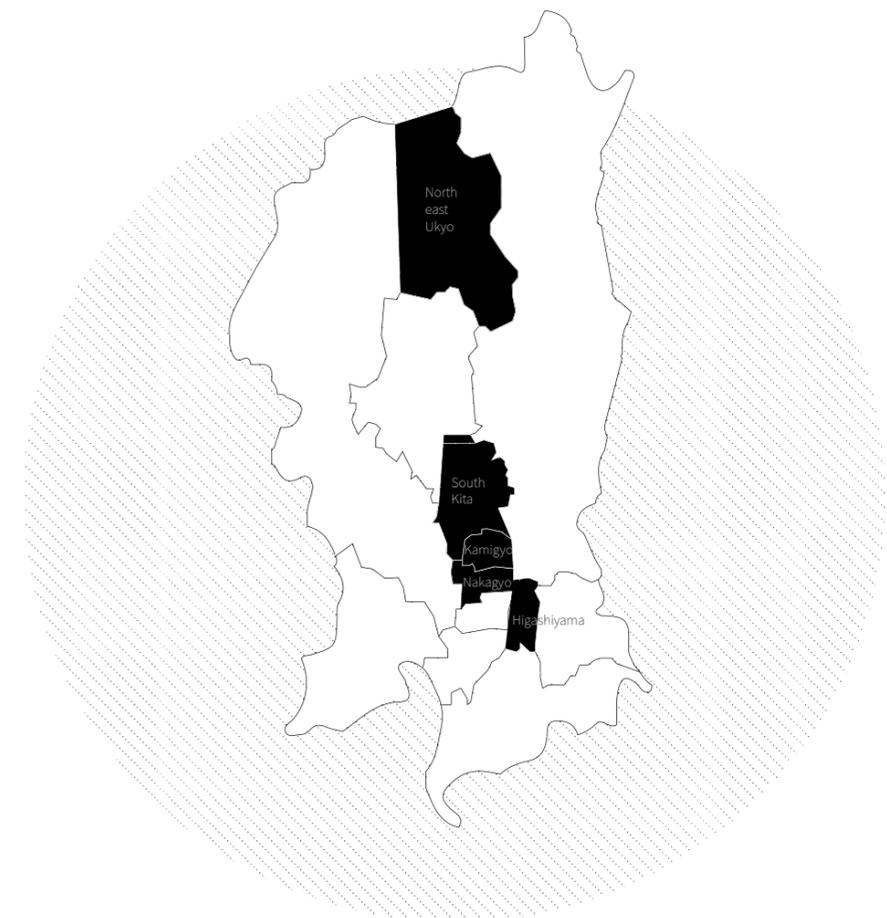
HIghlighted wards by national Government

Kamigyo
Ward

The municipality has highlighted some areas to be redeveloped, including Kamigyo, which is still waiting, given priority to the tourist and commercial districts.

What action plan is reserved for neighborhoods that are exclusively for residential use and characterized by considerable density?

Nanni and Shoran Districts are a clear exaxmple of districts described above. The political plan for these areas is not yet clear, but the intentions are to involve the community as much as possible, coming to delegate decision-making power and the action itself to the residents of the district.

Just as during the Meji period, today the same commitment is required to the districts that once built schools, still maintained at their own expense.

Consolidated the essence of the school district in which the school becomes the district's reference and symbolizes the industriousness of the district, today we talk rather of social redevelopment.

HIghlighted
districts by
Kyoto City

Nanni and
Shoran
Districts
crossed by
Tenjin River
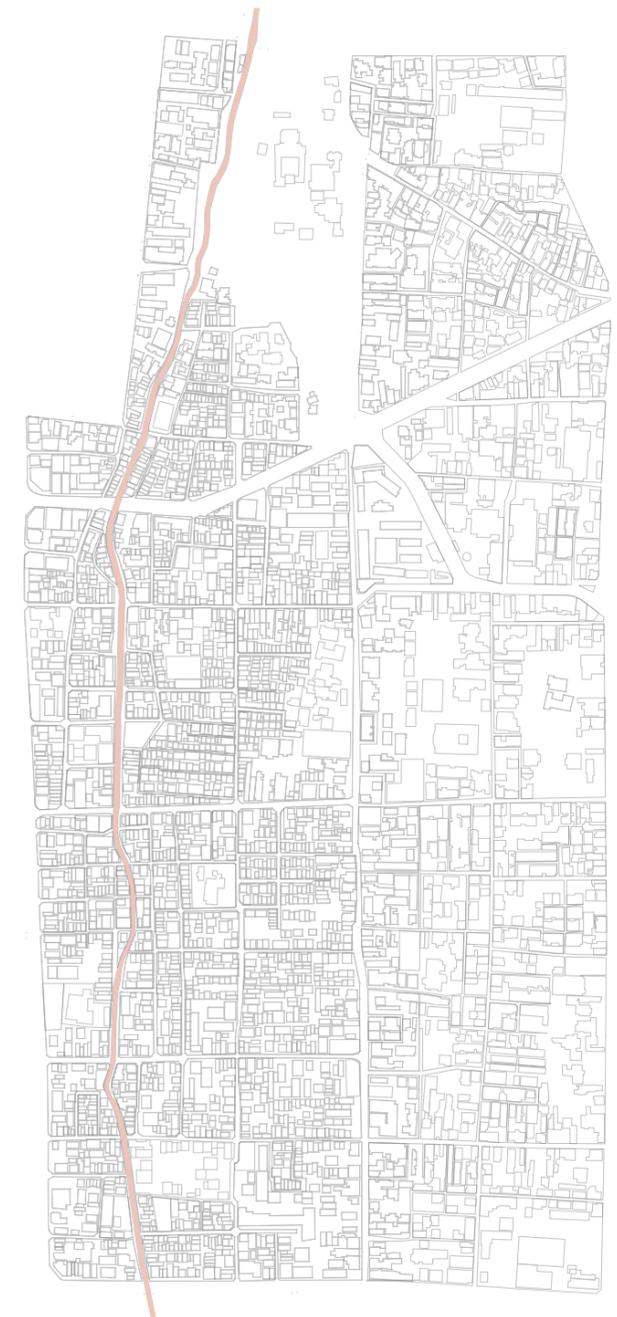
SOLID | VOIDS

Interaction Places

Although the districts examined did not see strong population growth (+ 2.2% from 2010 to 2015), they were nevertheless characterized by a high population density. With a total of 85,113 inhabitants, the density is 12,000/km² compared to the 4,600/km² of Fushimi, 5,200/km² of Higashiyama, 1,300/km2 of Kita, 6,300/km² of Minami, 15,000/km² of Nagakyo, 2,500/km² of Nishikyo, 680/km² of Sakyo, 12.000/km² of Shimogyo, 700/km² of Ukyo, 4700/km² of Yamashina.[1]

Analyzing the composition in terms of voids and full of Kamigyo is evident as its fabric is very dense. The privatization of the soil leaves imperceptible scraps of spaces for meeting.

The historical interaction space, previously analyzed, is the road. By reviewing the routes, it is clear that they are now generally driveways, thus not allowing a degree of livability of the road historically established in Japanese culture.

The sharing space par excellence has thus lost over time, without finding a substitute. Another urban place, however, had the same importance, now forgotten, the river.

The intent of the project is then to re-propose the river as a place of interaction.

1   Kyoto city website: http://www.city.kyoto.lg.jp/

Scheme explaining decisional path
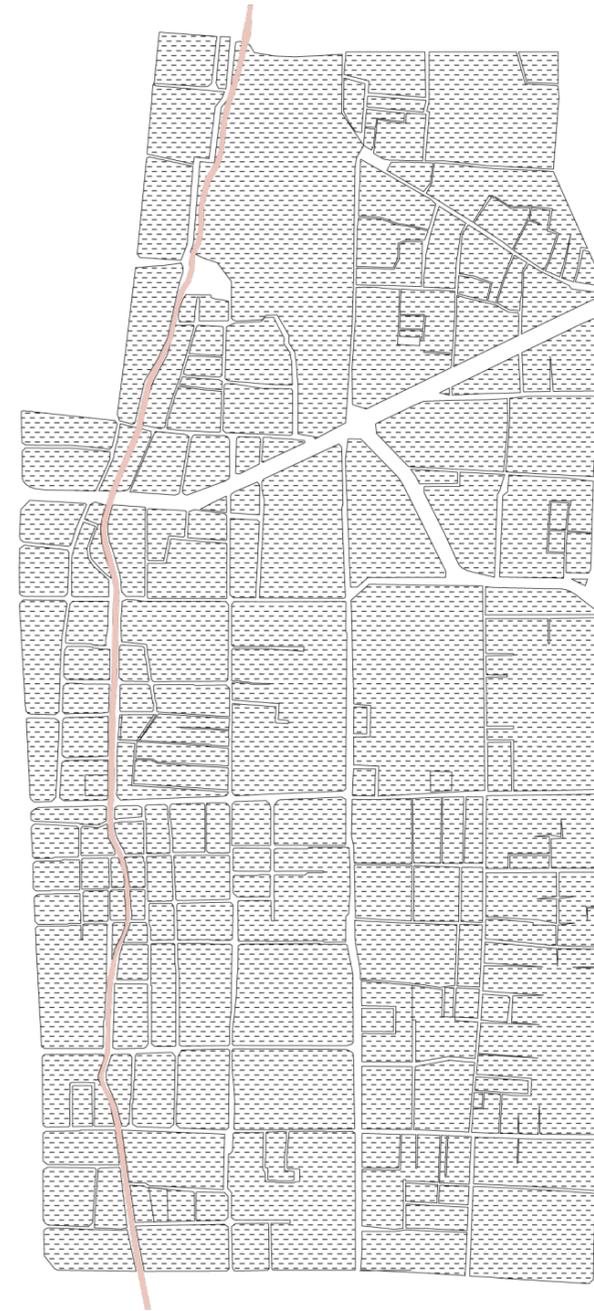
REDISCOVERING URBAN WATERS

Tenjin RIversides

The Tenjin River runs through one of the densest areas of Kamigyo Ward. It is therefore the ideal place for a proposal for the redevelopment of high-densed neighborhoods, starting from the restoration of the role of water in sociability.

The area examined is therefore that of the banks of Tenjin starting from the Sanin Main Line tracks up to the Kitano Shrine. These two poles joined to the axes of the main flows, delimit an area almost entirely residential in which there are no places of tourism. The accentuation of the phenomenon is along the banks of the river, currently in a state of neglect more or less serious at different points on the banks.

In this page and in the next: views of Tenjin riversides
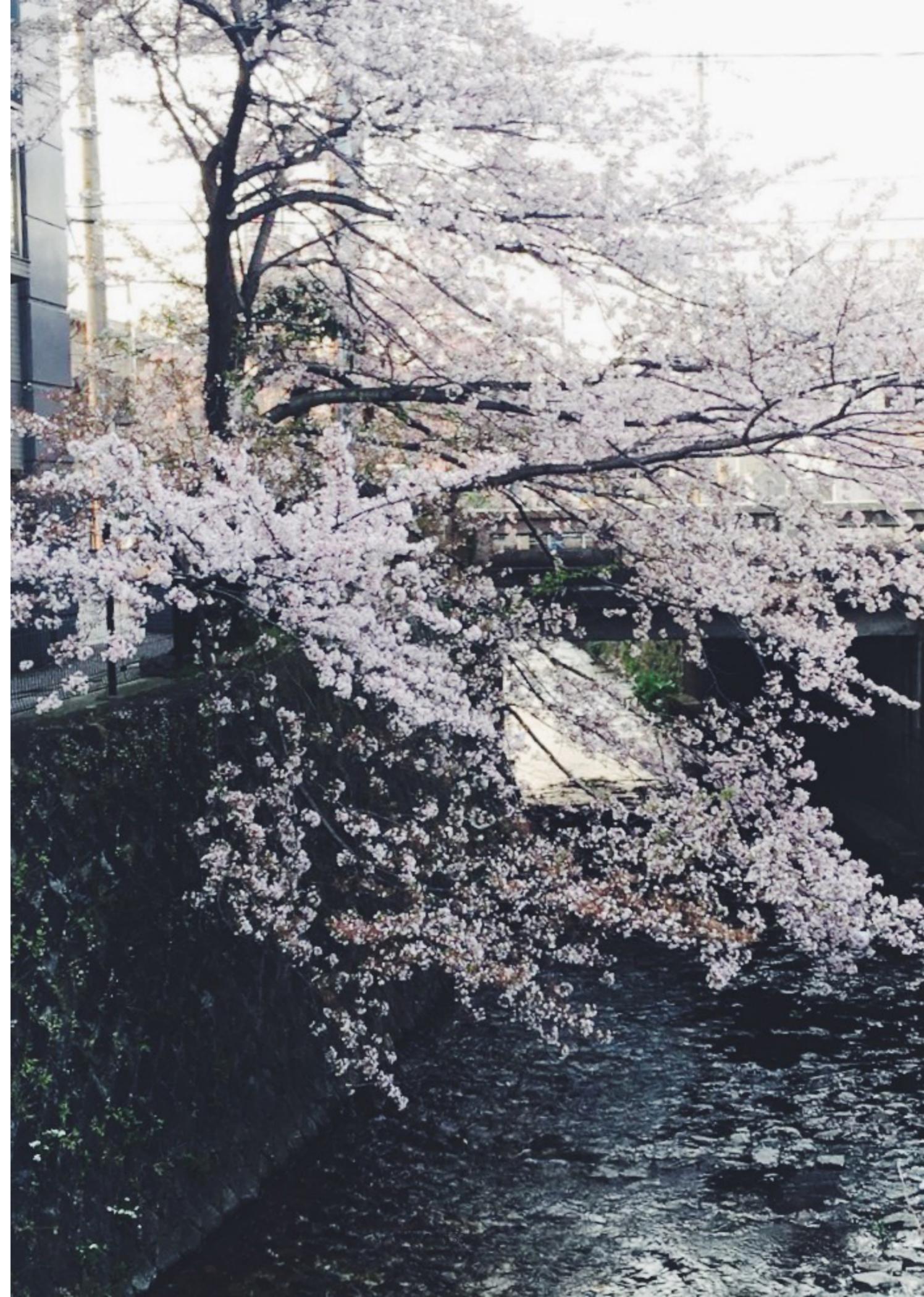
DESIGN PROPOSAL

———————

06

"Social Life as
Space-forming
and Space-
contingent"

Spaces for the community diminish over time. Among the causes are the changes described in the previous chapters. The absence immediately apparent from a foreign gaze, begins to be resentful also by the locals. In the chapter of the case studies, it is clear how in different contexts a new way of living the neighborhood in Japan is proposed. The old way of seeing the school with this social role continues to exist, but the ratio of the number of school inhabitants has changed proportions and the dislocation of these structures is not dense enough to guarantee micro social systems spread uniformly in the territory.

The municipality starts worrying about securing new spaces of this type in high-densed areas, but it aims mostly at securing in the event of fires and earthquakes, providing each zone of an open area shelter.

The intent of this thesis is instead to turn to integration and social activism, already present but lacking of primary tools.

LIGHT COLONIZATION OF SPACES

"Reshaping the empty in order to regenerate the full"

Analyzing the shores of Tenjin river, it is notable how the density of the building is block-by-block variable. It would seem interesting to enter the low-density areas in order to rethink the voids. The apparently empty spaces, however, are adiacent lots to homes or services.

The idea then becomes to exploit the few urban voids highlighted and the public green areas, strengthening the latter by means of a "light colonization" of community spaces.
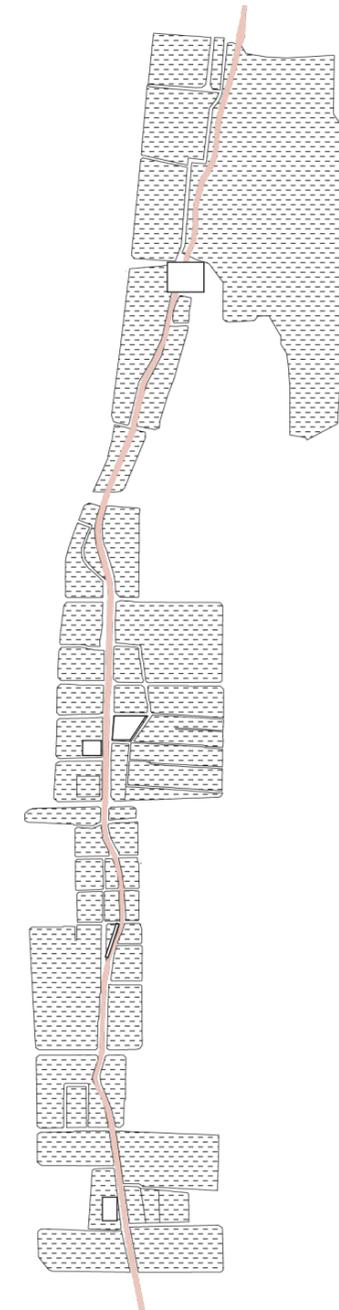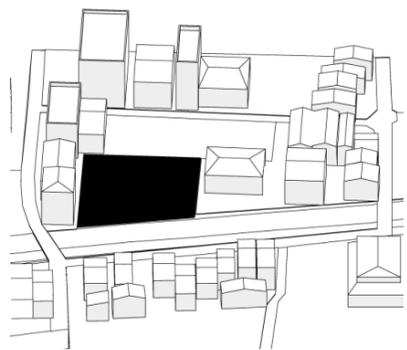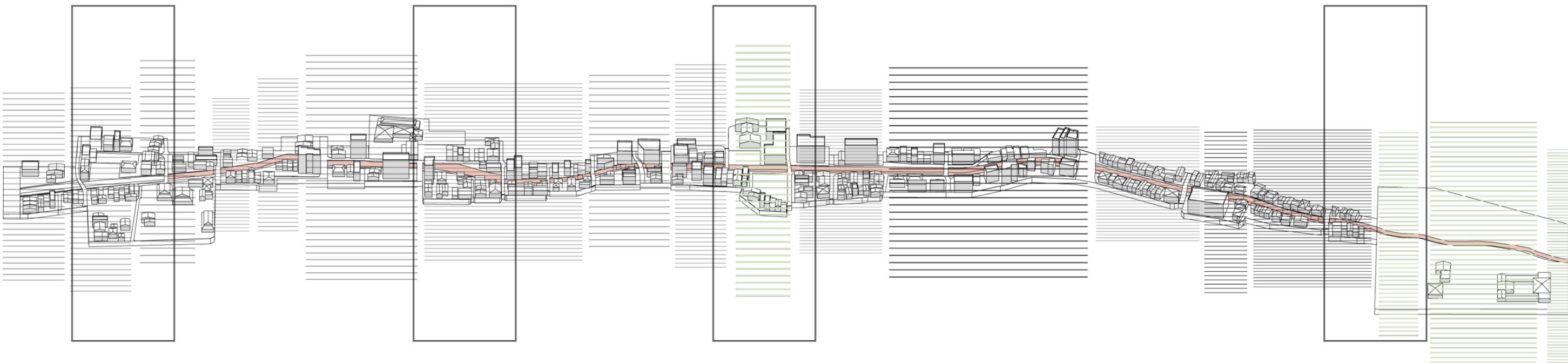
vacant house

urban void
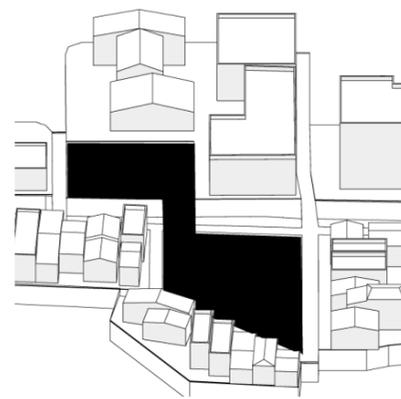
public green area
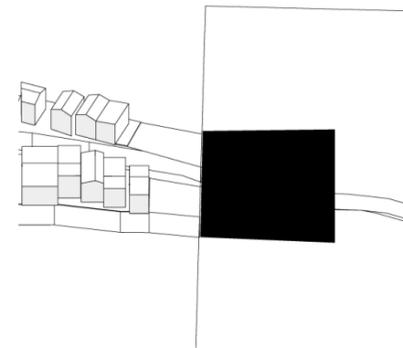
public green area

COMMUNITY AND WATER

Project Intentions

The proposed functions aim at reconnecting a dense but decomposed fabric in many micro-units not communicating with each other.

The proposed functions aim at reconnecting a dense but decomposed fabric in many micro-units not communicating with each other.

In choosing which were the ideal functions in pursuing this purpose, the reference is that of the historical shared activities present in the Japanese urban tradition. The objectif is respecting above all those connected to the riverside life, such as cultivation, the river as a place of contemplation both in the sacred and in the profane, pleasure. Remaining always on the theme of water another thought goes to one of the favorite shared activities in the city of Kyoto, but still not enough spread in this neighborhood, the "sento". In the spirit of the

re-proposal in a contemporary key of solid traditions, there is also a shared kitchen connected to an urban garden for community use.

The primary purpose of the intervention, however, remains not only to provide the community with new neighborhood activities, but to enhance its autonomy as proposed by the municipality, which intends to provide the neighborhoods of the right means to start regeneration.

In speaking of autonomy, we intend to return to the discourse of the horizontality of the directional process, recalling the ancient management of the 'bangumi', of which we can still see some glimpses.

The proposal is then that of a direct management plan or granting to private individuals of spaces built by means of financing and taxes within the community.

In this page function proposed-next: management scheme

COOMUNITY HEADQUARTER   RIVERSIDE REGENERATION   SHARED KITCHEN + URBAN GARDEN   SENTO
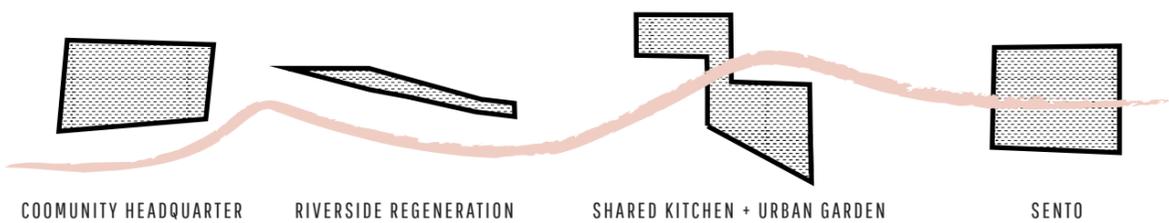
COOMUNITY HEADQUARTER

CONSTRUCTION	community taxes and financing
MANAGEMENT	community
ACCESSES	controlled accesses in the indoor spaces

RADIO STATION

CONSTRUCTION	community fund raising and financing
MANAGEMENT	licensing
ACCESSES	employed only

RIVERSIDE REGENERATION

CONSTRUCTION	Kyoto City
MANAGEMENT	Kyoto City
MAINTENANCE	Kyoto City

SHARED KITCHEN

CONSTRUCTION	community
MANAGEMENT	Users
ACCESSES	controlled accesses with reservation of cooking places

URBAN GARDEN

| CONSTRUCTION | community |
| ASSIGNMENT | based on income bracket (every 2 years) |
| LEASE | annual fee |

SENTO

| CONSTRUCTION | community |
| MANAGEMENT | private licensing |
| ACCESSES | upon payment |

NEIGHBORHOOD HEADQUARTER

07
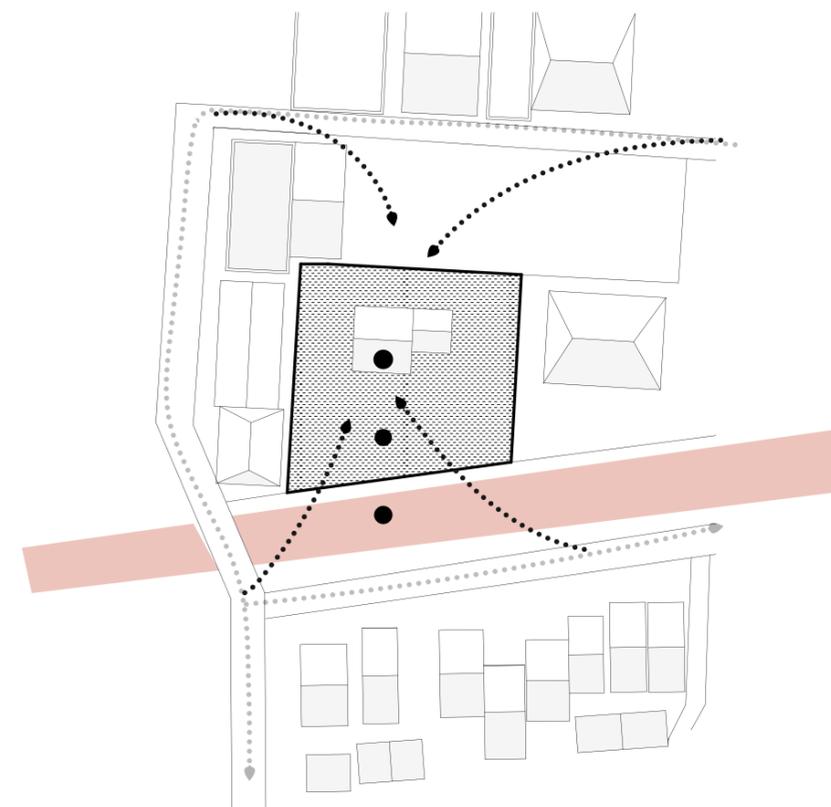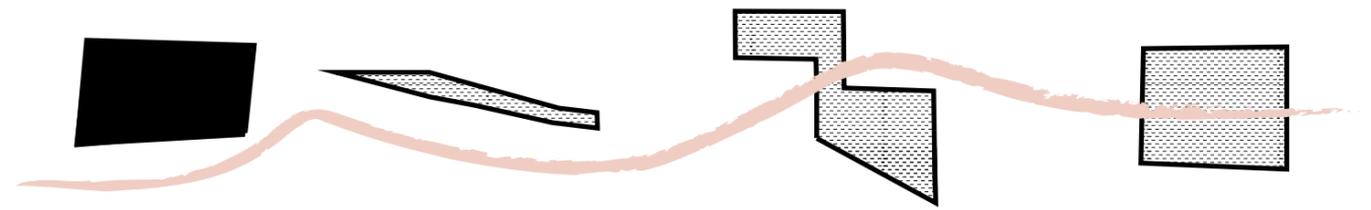
VACANT HOUSE RE-USE

The second theme leading the design process is the one of communication. During a meeting with the responsible of the Kyoto urban planning office, it has been highlighted the lack of consciousness among the communities, perhaps because of an inadequate propaganda, perhaps for lack of accessible places where there is the possibility of an effective exchange of information.

Following this second line is part of the project introducing a platform hosting the neighborhood headquarter and a local radio station. The functions come to settle in an abandoned house destined to demolition for security reasons.

Breaking up the core, its envelope remains as a monument and hosts the home of the district, a place of communication and sharing, accompanied by a little kitchen and services always included in the existing envelope. The first level is addressed to the radio station, always connected to the exterior through a glazed wall communicating with the floating arena. What is thought for the exterior is a flexible platform proceeding from the headquarter to the river. Its structure is able to host different activities at the same time or bigger events involving all its components at once. The space is thought following a modular scheme in order to avoid excessive expenses in terms of construction and maintenance.

radio station

community room

services

radio station

community room

services

floating arena

stage
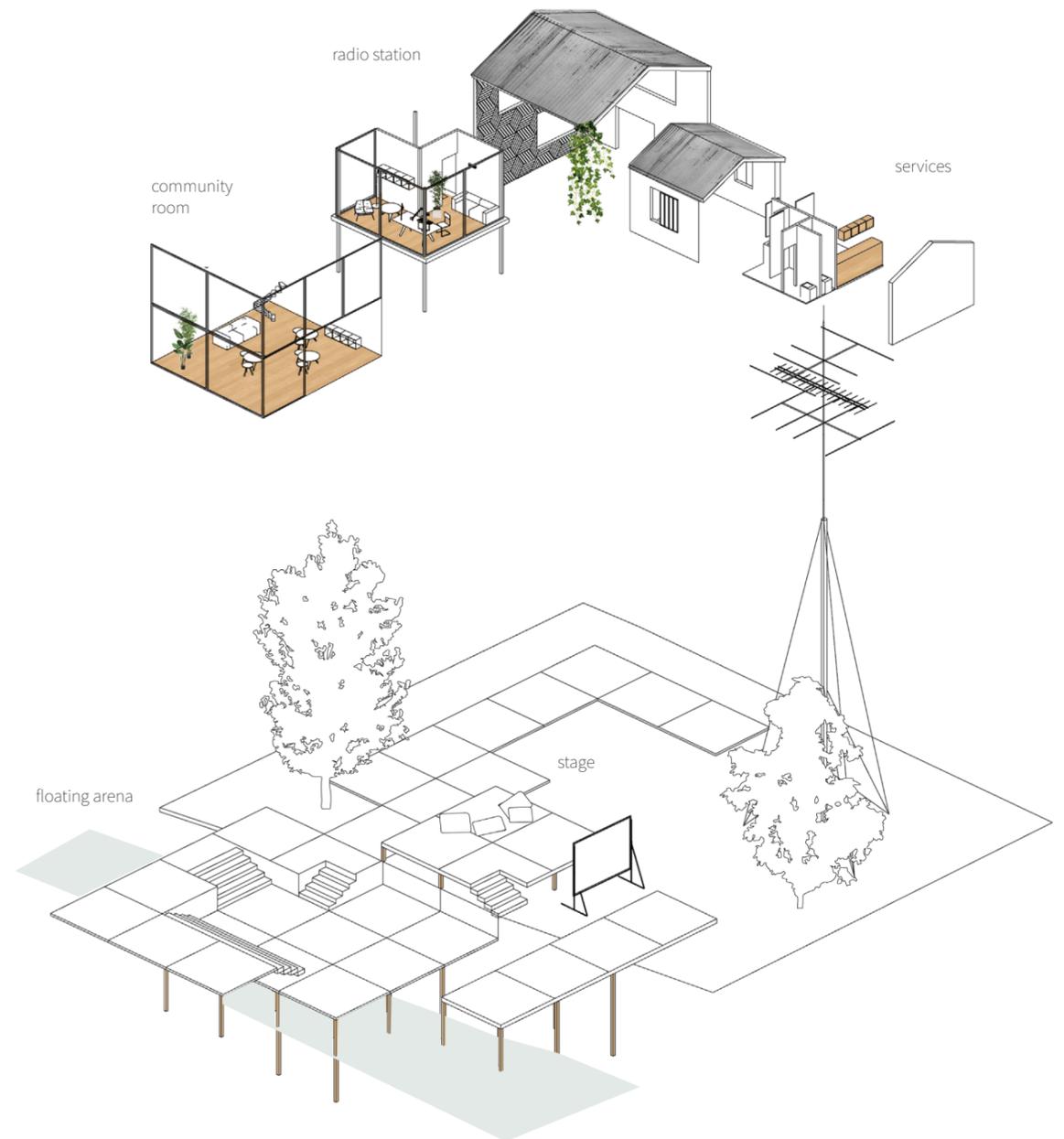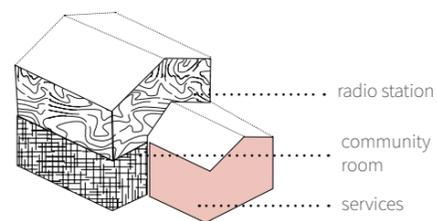
RIVERSIDE

08
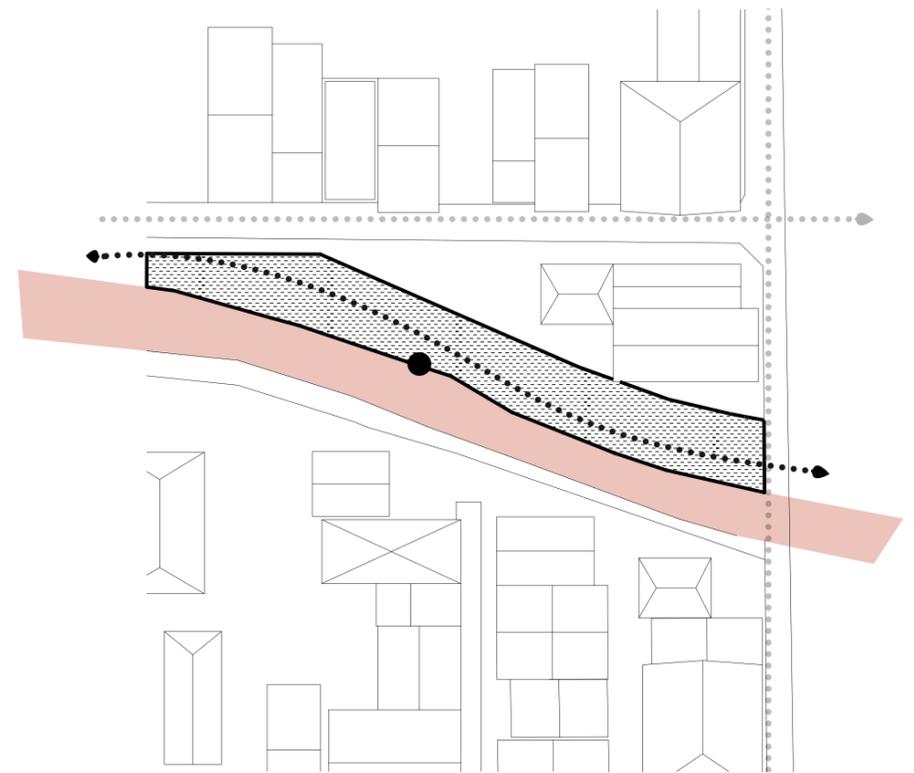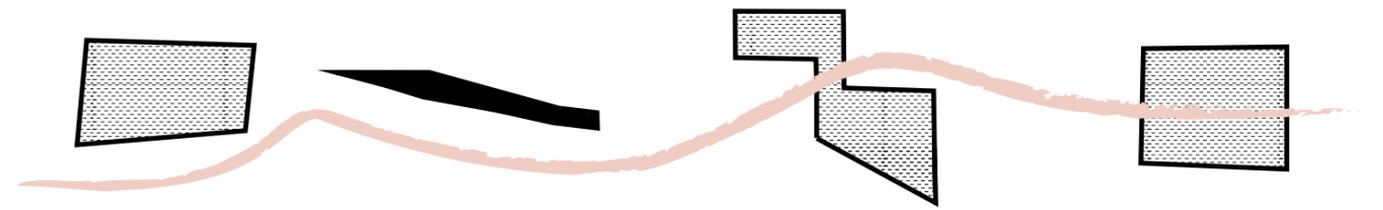
RIVERSIDE REGENERATION
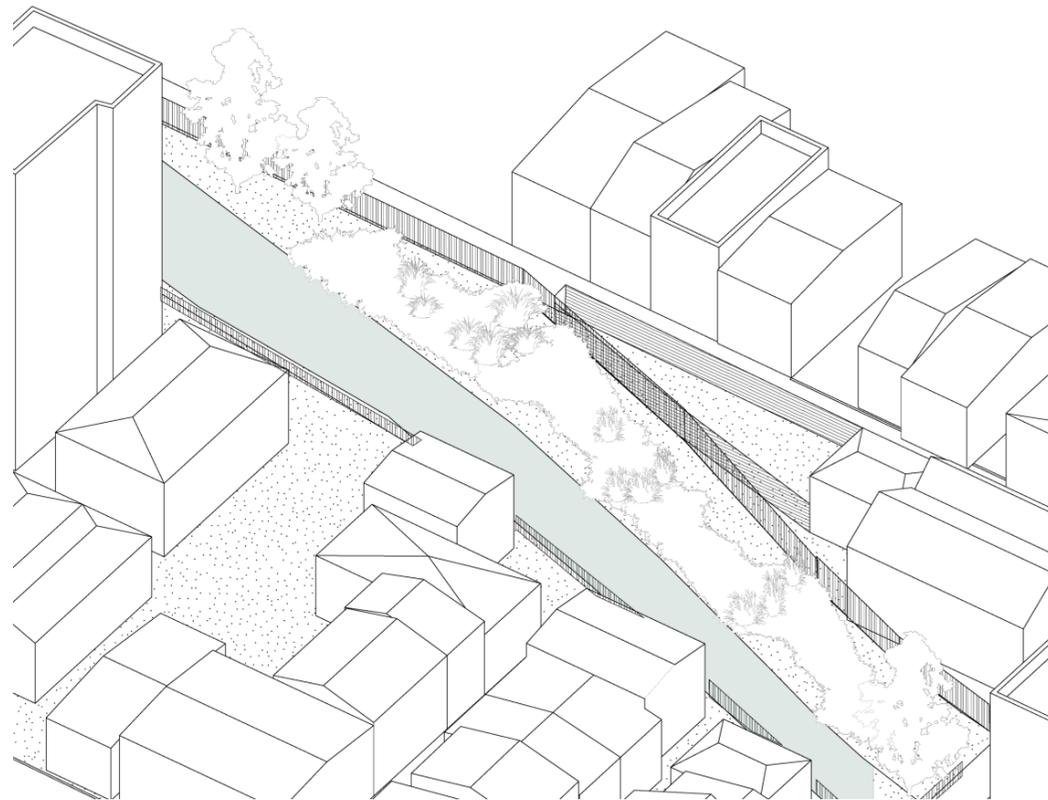
Among the proposed interventions, a case of redevelopment of the river bank. A non-invasive movement on the natural slope that runs along the river Tenjin at the limit between the two school districts. It is a punctual but replicable intervention.

Once againthe modularity is at the base of the design, for reasons of cost, but also to remember the ancient Japanese construction proportions. It is in fact the triplication of the tatami unit by composing flexible panels that can interface with the green and with the passersby at the same time.

All this takes place on an urban emptiness of the city, respecting the limits with the private appurtenant areas and indeed enriching the boundary.

In this case it is assumed the contribution by the city for the total costs and maintenance, being part of the infrastructural category.
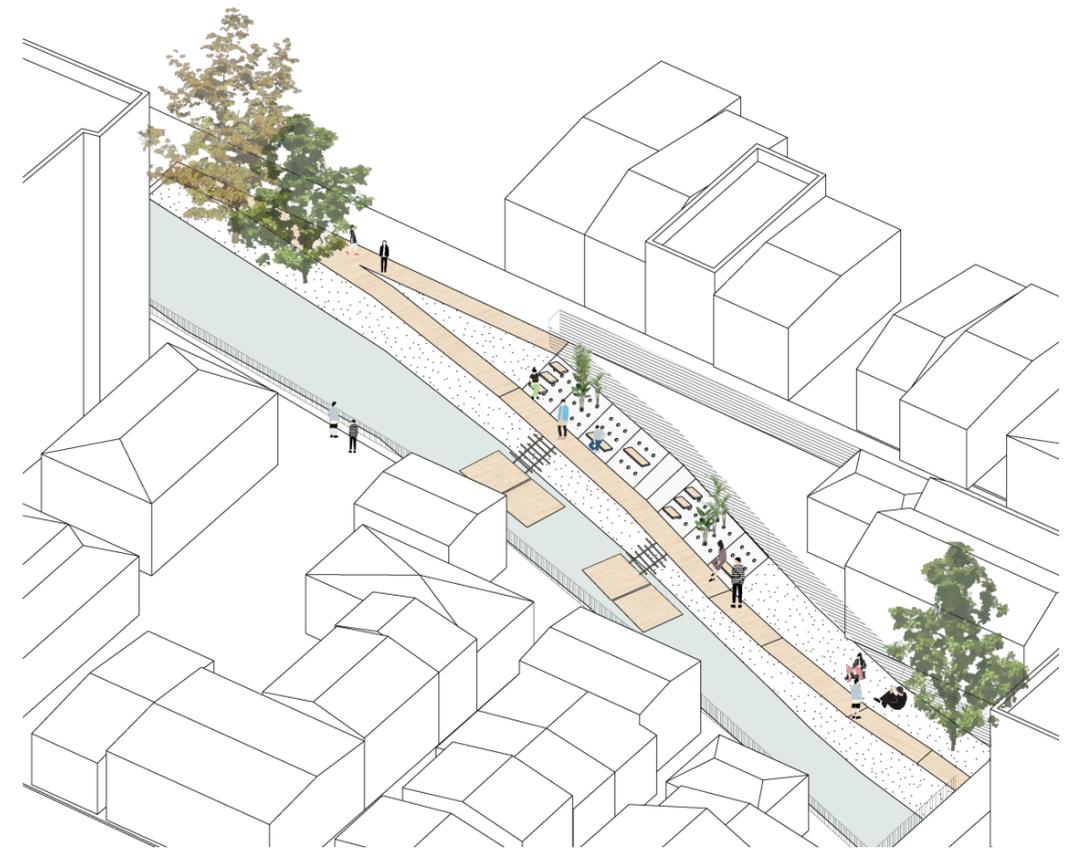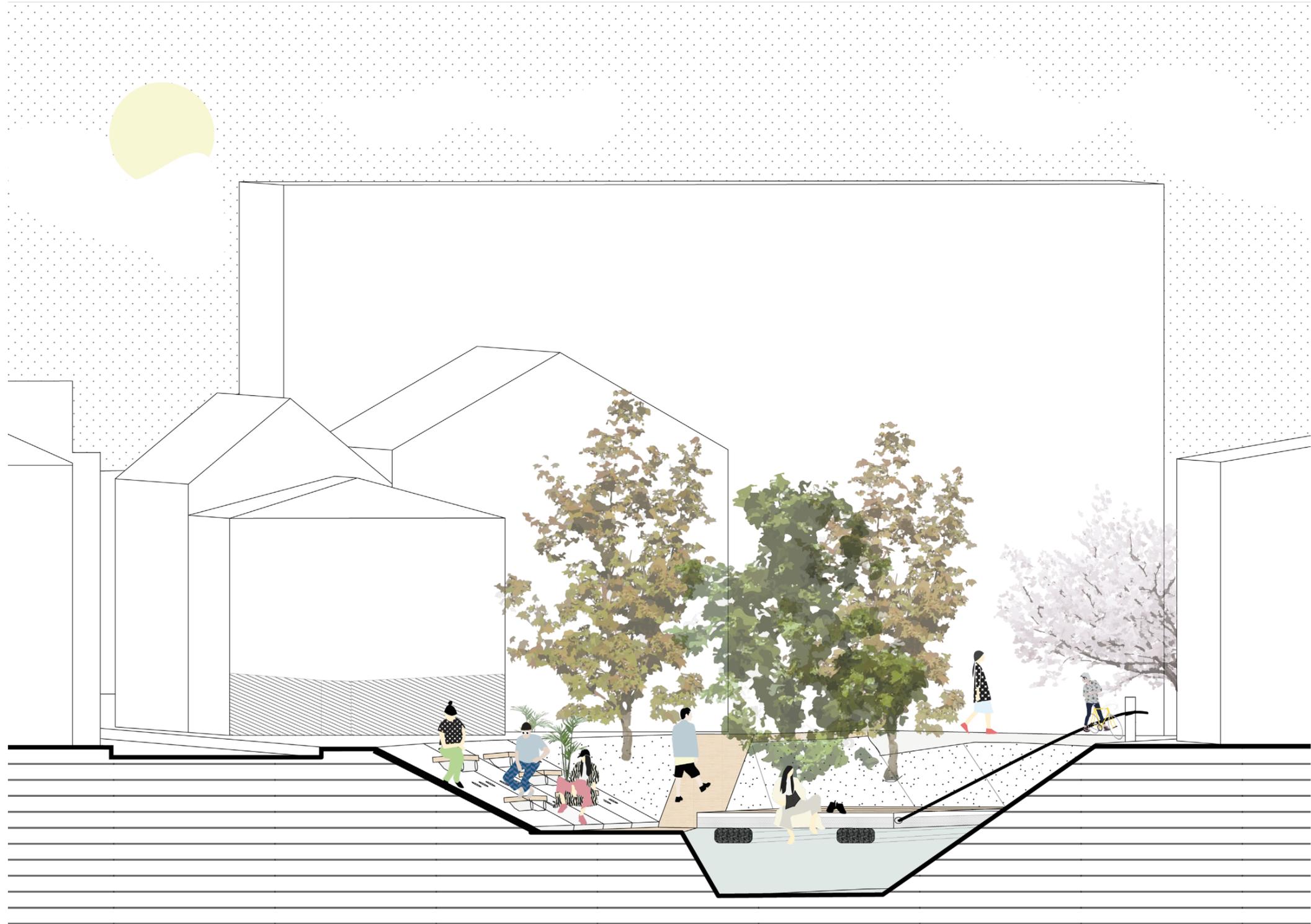
# SHARED KITCHEN
+
URBAN GARDEN

09
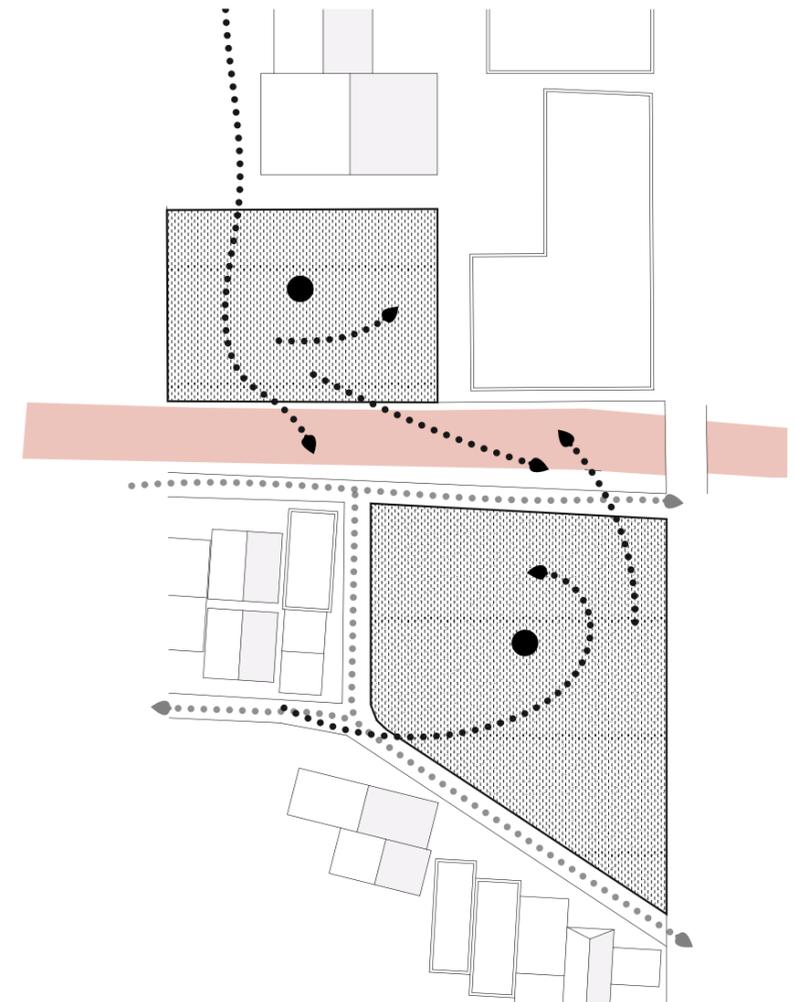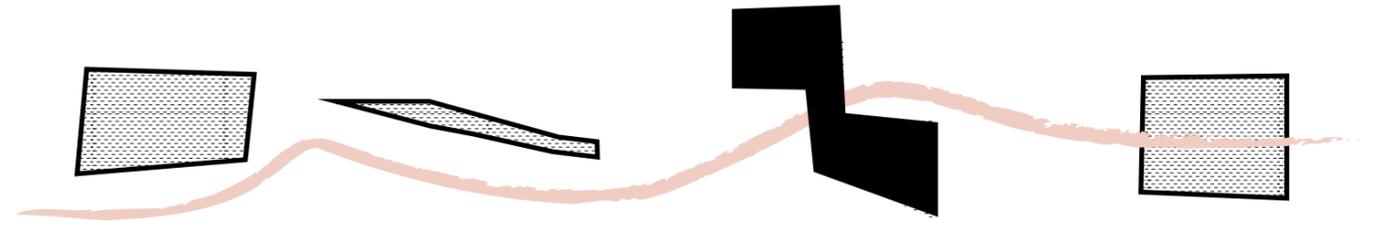
GREEN COLONIZATION

Looking at the third intervention, we move from the settlement into a resulting urban void to an undeveloped green area. The design question then becomes a commitment to supply the area with services without aggravating the present density state.

The occasion is that of two green areas separated by the river. The proposal is that of an urban garden in an area destined to be a shelter point in case of earthquakes or fires, thus maintaining the required function and serving the users now devoid of adjacent spaces to have the opportunity to grow in the city. The connection through the water with the second area lends itself to the interconnection between the two spaces. Historically, in traditional 'roji', a shared kitchen sometimes appeared that suggests how the sharing of domestic spaces was a common practice and now lost due to the new urban proportions. The proposed function is therefore a shared kitchen directly connected to the urban garden and accessible from every point of the block. It is an open space that respects the typological proportions of the traditional urban house. It does not impose on the surroundings neither in height nor volumetrically. The interior space is designed by internal curvilinear partitions that embody the new dynamism of those who inhabit the space. The communication with the outside is again present and the platform on the river constitutes the extension of the indoor in the outdoor. Lightness and transparency want to be key words of this colonization that intends not to invade the pre-existing green, but rather embellish it. Every form is an accomplice of this will. The 'impluvium' roof allows the kitchen to use treated gray water starting from rainwater, as well as providing the internal environment of great natural brightness through the caveat.
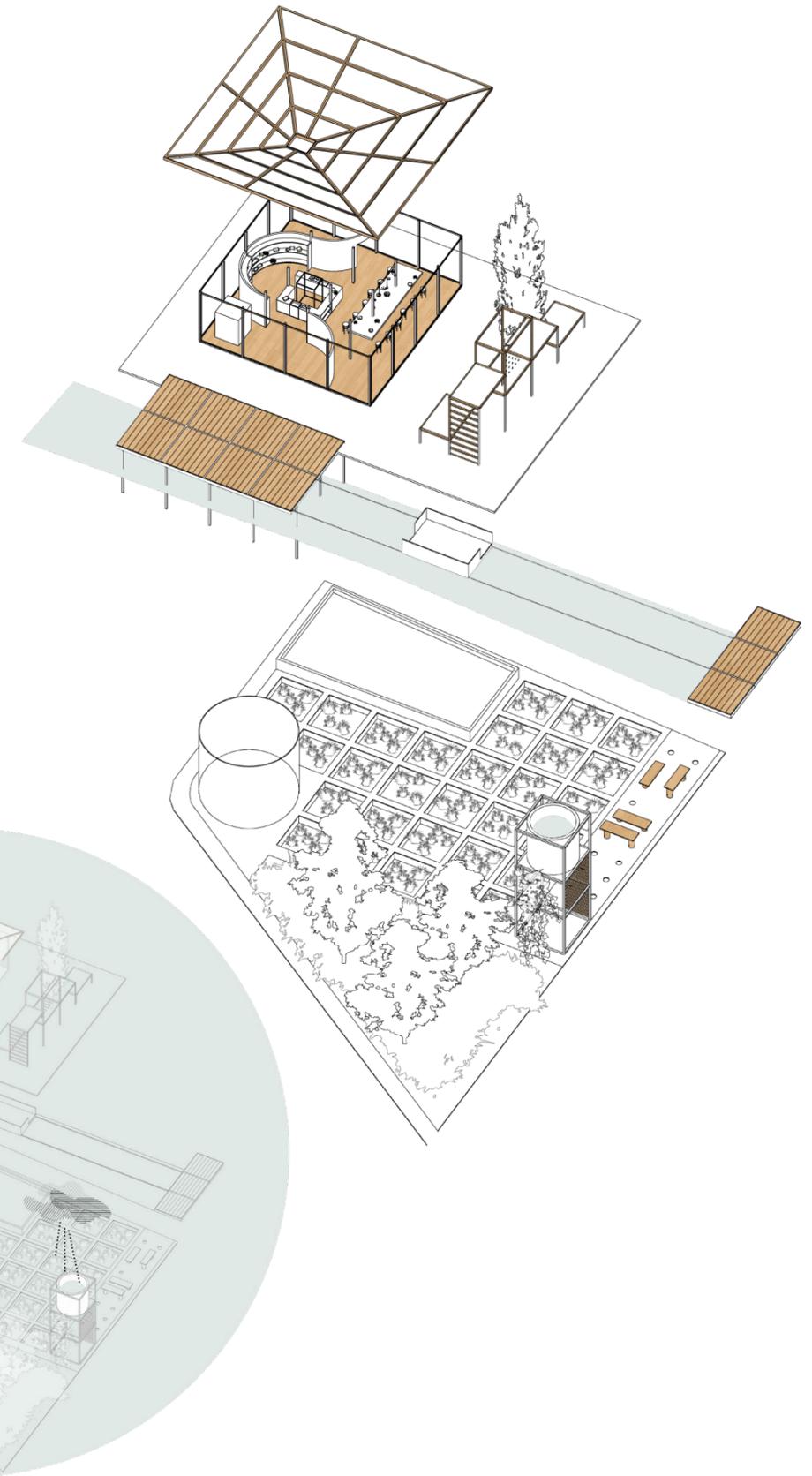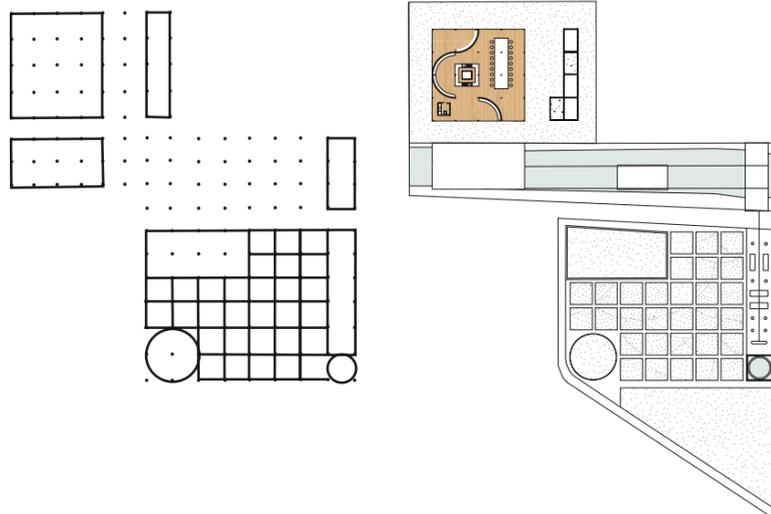
SENTO

10
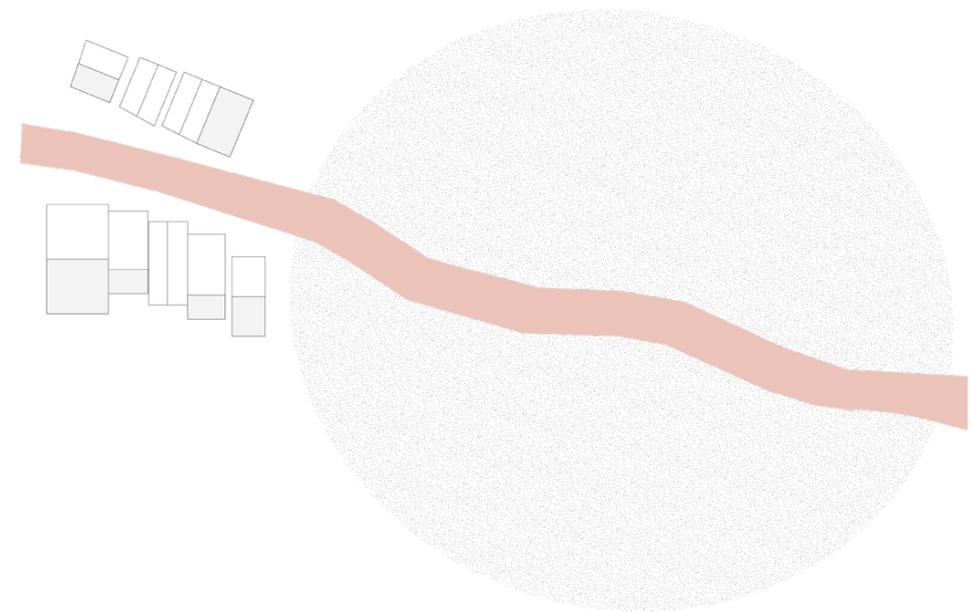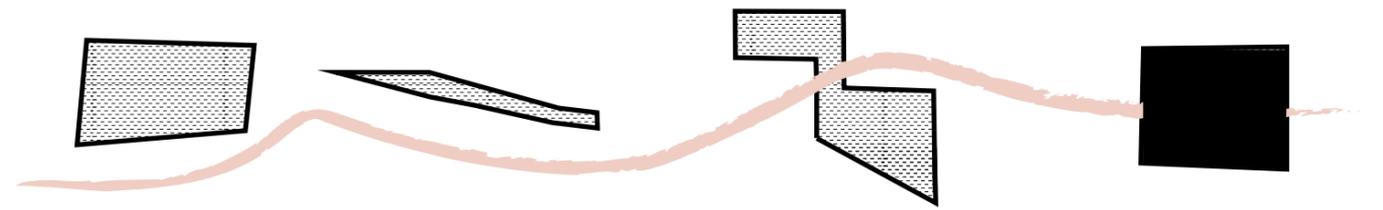
IN AND OUT

Going up the river you reach the Kitano shrine and the grove where the temple is immersed. Between the last block of houses and the temple there is a public green area, not built but not used by users as a park, as not accessible and not adequately equipped. It remains a piece of uncultivated nature, which like other places in the city turn out to be precious places for spiritual retreat.

The place of 'sento', since the beginning is closely connected to the spirituality of the temples. The first appearing are even managed by the Buddhist monks themselves.

It settles in this place of city, another place of urban sociality: the sento.

Once again the theme of modularity, transparency, visual and material communication with the exterior, with the river, returns. The composition is at the base of the architecture: a platform on poles, a volume, a roof of beams. The lure is at the platforms along the nineteenth century river. The intent is once again to bring people back to the connection between everyday life and the river.
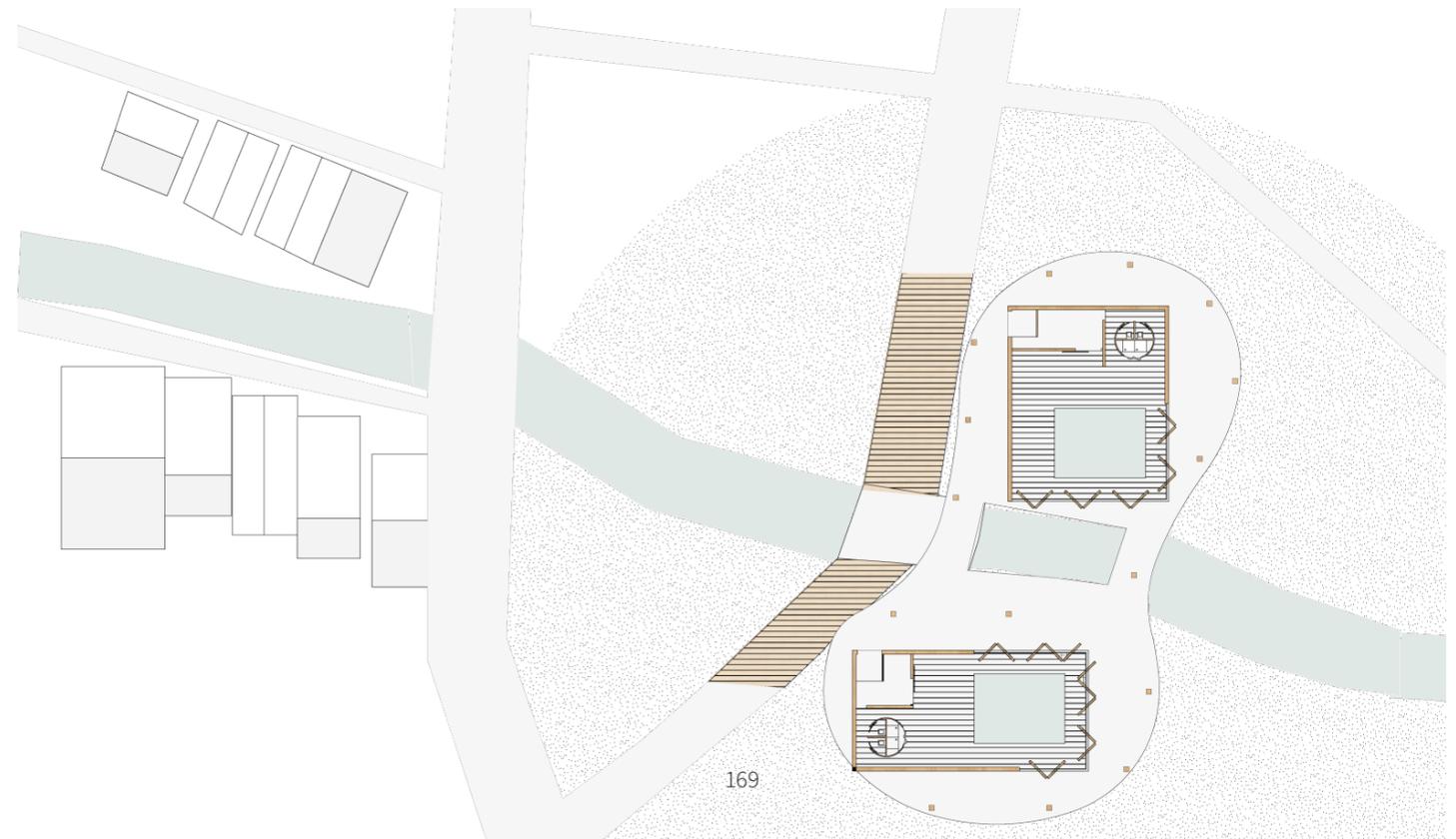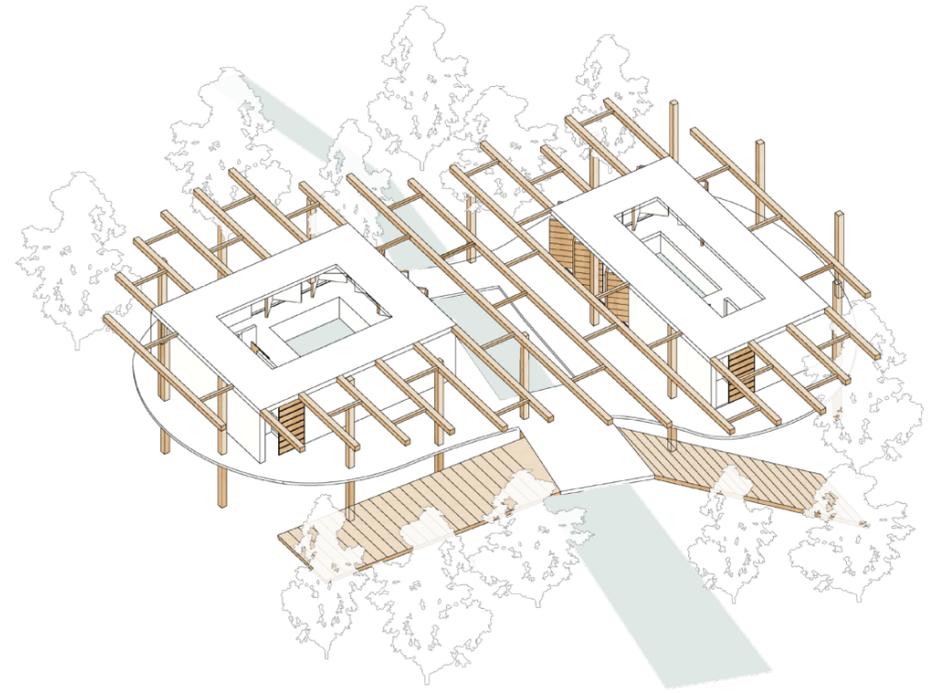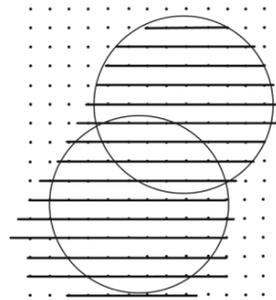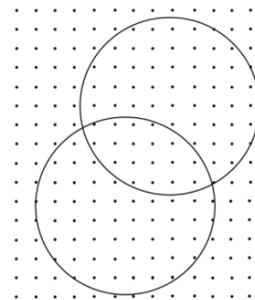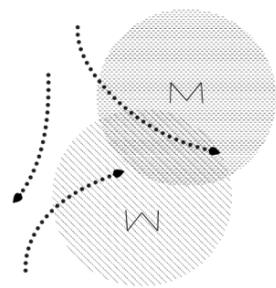
CONCLUSION

_____

The thesis work is part of a new line of reflections and research on the urban form of contemporary Japan involved in what is called "a new era of change by means of a new urban architecture, which connects the multitude of fragments re-thinking urban as a sea of resources " (Tappei Fujiwara, 2017).

The passage that is being carried out recently is the one from a static to a dynamic order of the city. By means of individual small-scale interventions, the attempt is to reconnect an urban environment fragmented into many micro static units, extremely compact but para-doxically isolated from each other.

An ancient theme is re-pro-posed: the neighborhood, which forms the basis of the simplest and most basic form of association we encounter in city life.

The architectural project is confirmed as an essential means for the adaptation of the urban area in connection with social life. This newfound collaboration between form and society solves the prob-lem of the historical cause-effect relationship between city and indi-vidual that lives in the city itself. The concept of urban metamorphosis that responds to new housing needs returns. We insist on the reciprocity between form and society, this time imposing a form on which we will reshape social life, which at the mo-ment is a clear intention of society itself, but which lacks expression and concretization.

With a European approach, which does not want to erase his-tory even when it embodies a ques-tionable form and ideal, the work of this thesis aims to re-functionalize what already exists, inserting new pieces into the void that can reha-bilitate the full. It is a question of rethinking the void to regenerate the existing, which remains unchanged.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Historical References

BRUMANN C., *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto - claiming a right to the past,* London, New York, Routledge 2012

DE PALMA, A.M., Living in Roji Alleys: smallness, sharing and public space, 2016

JINNAI, H., *Tokyo: a Spatial Anthropology,* University of California Press, California, 1995

KAIU MIZUNO, *Kyoto Alleway Scenes,* 2005

MASAFUMI YAMASAKI, *Kyoto, its cityscapes, traditions and heritage,* Process Architecture, n.116, 1994

NISHIMURO, YUKIO, *Machizukuri from alleys,* 2006

SADLER, ARTHUR LINSDAY, *Short history of Japanese architecture,* Vermont, Tuttle Publishing, 1963

SAND J., *Tokyo Vernacular,* 2013

SORESEN A., *The Making of Urban Japan: Cities and Planning from Edo to the Twenty First Century,* Routledge, 2004

STAVROS, MATTHEW, *Kyoto: an urban history of Japan's premodern capital,* University of Hawaii Press, 2014

Case Studies Referencies

ATSUSHI U., TABATA SHŪ, *Alley research - another city square,* 2013

BAMBANG S., BUDI S., HERMIN W., *In Search of the Power of Javanese Culture against the Cultural Urbanization in Kotagede, Yogyakarta-Indonesia,* Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, Vol.68, pp.676-686 19 December 2012

BARALE M., *City portraits. In Lisbon the ransom of the center passes by Mouraria,* 2017

DARGAN,L., *Participation and Local Urban Regenration: The Case of the New Deal for Communities (NDC) in the UK,* Routledge, 2009

FARACI,G., *Farm Cultural Park: an experience of social innovation in the recovery of the historical centre of Favara,* Palermo, 2016

HUMIN GU, CHRIS RYAN, *Place attachment, identity and community impacts of tourism - the case of a Beijing Hutong,* 2008

MITCHELL MAURICE, PATWARI SHAMOON,TANG BO, *Learning from Delhi,* Farnham, Burlington, Ashgate, 2010

MONTGOMERY J., *Dublin, Sheffield, Manchester and Adelaide: Cultural quarters as mechanism for urban regeneration,* City Edge, Esher Charlesworth,2005

SANTOSA, REVIANTO, *Kotagede: Life Between Walls,* PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, Jakarta, 2007

YUNG ESTER HIU KWAN, EDWIN HON WAH CHAN, YING XU, *Sustainable Development and the Rehabilitation of a Historic Urban District - Social Sustainability in the case of Tianzifang in Shangai,* Wiley Online Library, 2014

Urban Regeneration Theories

BIANCHETTI, C. *Spazi che contano - Il progetto urbanistico in epoca neo-liberale,* Donzelli Editore, Roma, 2016

HYSLER-RUBIN,N., *Patrick Geddes and town planning- a critical view,* Routledge, New York, 2011

JACOBS J., *The Death and Life of Great American Cities,* New York, 1961

ROBERTS, P. HUGH SYKES, *Urban Regeneration: aHandbook,* London, 2000

Japanese Urban Policies References

BRUMANN C., *Tradition, Democracy and the Townscape of Kyoto - claiming a right to the past,* London, New York, Routledge 2012

HARDING, R., *Is this the solution to Japan's glut of empty homes?* Financial Times, 2015

JOHNSTON, E., *Kansai uses subsidies to fill empty homes, but persuading aging population to pull up stakes remains a challenge,* The Japan Times, 2016

MUROTANI BUNJI; *Tokyo : hope and recovery : urban civilization and environment,* Tokyo : 1996

SCHULZ E., BRUMANN, C., *Urban Spaces in Japan, cultural and social perspectives*, Routledge New York, NY 10017, 2012

URBAN REVITALIZATION AND CREATION PROMOTION OFFICE, *Measures for Populated Urban Districts and Narrow Backstreets in Kyoto City,* CIty Planning Bureau, Kyoto City, 2016

URBAN REVITALIZATION AND CREATION PROMOTION OFFICE, *The historical scenic beauty of Kyoto to be maintained and improved*

Design References

HILDNER, C., *Future Living: Collective Housing in Japan,* Birkhäuser Verlag GmbH, Basel, 2014

IMAI, H., *Preserving Tokyo's Alleyways: from marginal to neighbourhood place*

IMAI, H.,*The liminal nature of alleyways: Understanding the alleyway roji as a 'Boundary' between past and present.* J. Cities, 2012

KUROKAWA K., *KIsho Kurokawa: architettura e design*, Electa, 1983

KUROKAWA, K., *Toshi no kakumei, Revolution of city,* Chuokoron-shinsha, 2006

NOBUYUKI YOSHIDA, *Begginning of the town,* The Japan Architect, n. 103, 2017

TEPPEI FUJIWARA, *Towards a New Urban Town House,* The Japan Architect, n. 106, 2017